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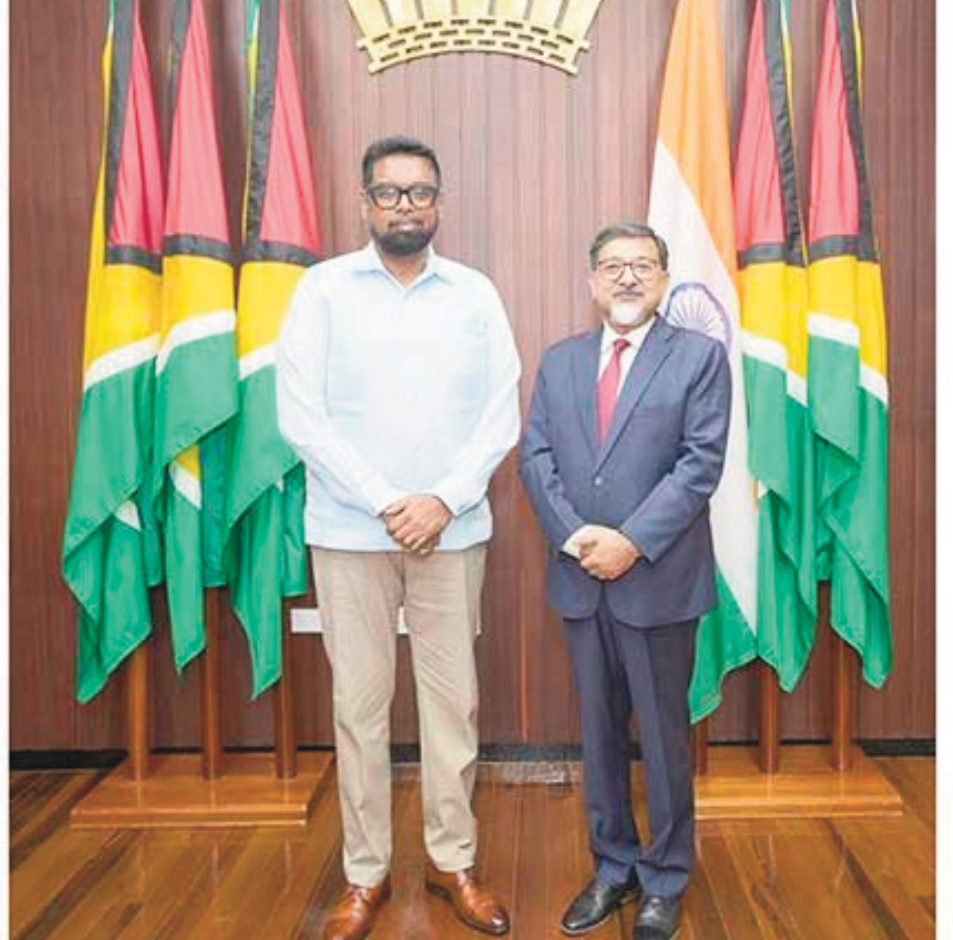


## Eyes of the world on Toronto

The City of Toronto is hosting six matches and FIFA Fan Festival Toronto from June 11 to July 19. Games in Toronto kick off this Friday (June 12) with the first-ever men's FIFA World Cup match on Canadian soil and featuring Canada's Men's National Team and conclude with a round of 32 match on July 2.

Embodying the "The World in a City" theme, Toronto showcases its passion for soccer and multicultural identity. The City's diverse neighbourhoods, united by a profound love for soccer, eagerly anticipate welcoming fans from around the world. FIFA fan festival events will be held at the Fort York National Historic Site & The Bentway. Above Mayor Olivia Chow celebrates the start of festivities.

The six matches in Toronto are Friday, June 12: Canada vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina (Canada's opening match); Tuesday, June 16: Ghana vs. Panama; Friday, June 19: Germany vs. Côte d'Ivoire; Monday, June 22: Panama vs. Croatia; Thursday, June 25: Senegal vs. Iraq; and Tuesday, June 30: Round of 32 Match



## Guyana eyes stronger India partnership

Guyana President Dr Irfaan Ali on Tuesday met with an advance delegation from India as Guyana and India move to strengthen bilateral relations ahead of a proposed visit by India's Minister of External Affairs, Dr Subrahmanyam Jaisankar.

The delegation was led by Secretary of Economic Relations in India's Ministry of External Affairs, Shri Sudhakar Dalela, and included senior officials from the country's foreign affairs and defence ministries. Former High Commissioner to Guyana Dr Amit Shivkumar Telang and others were also part of the meeting.

During the engagement at the Office of the President, President Ali, accompanied by members of his Cabinet, underscored the importance of deepening co-operation between the two countries and advancing strategic partnerships across key sectors. He highlighted opportunities for expanded collaboration in energy, agriculture, government efficiency, trade and finance, while discussions also focused on information and communications technology.

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## Province takes control of Gardiner, DVP from city

By Milan Maharaj  
LJI REPORTER

Ontario will be handed ownership of two of Toronto's busiest highways in fall 2027, a move the provincial government says will help support transportation infrastructure and reduce financial pressures on the city.

Ownership and management of the Gardiner Expressway and the Don Valley Parkway (DVP) will be transferred to the province on September 1, 2027, after negotiations between Ontario and the City of Toronto in 2023 within the framework of a financial agreement between the parties.

According to the government, the transfer will allow Toronto to free up money that was used to maintain and rehabilitate the expressways and use them in addressing other issues that the city needs to address. The province estimates that this transfer will save the city hundreds of millions of dollars in capital and operational costs in the coming years.

The provincial government said that preparations are underway to ensure a seamless shift of ownership and management over the next two years.

The Gardiner Expressway and the DVP are major transportation arteries in the GTA with hundreds of thousands of cars traveling on them daily. Both highways play an important role as a link between commuting and business operations in the region.

According to the Ontario provincial Minister of Transportation, Prabmeet Sarkaria, the agreement demonstrates the provincial government's effort to invest in transportation infrastructure and support municipalities. Likewise, the mayor of Toronto, Olivia Chow, welcomed the agreement saying it would give the city more room to finance their priorities.

The assumption of control of the highways by the province would help them plan and invest in necessary transportation infrastructure in the long run while promoting regional economic growth. The deal is anticipated after 2027 when the final stage of preparations for the handover would be made.



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# Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 120

## FROM US\$229M TO FASTEST GROWTH— PRESIDENT ALI MARKS ECONOMIC LEAP IN DIAMOND JUBILEE ADDRESS

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President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali addressing thousands of Guyanese and overseas visitors during the flag-raising ceremony for Guyana's 60th Independence Anniversary at Fort Island along the Essequibo River



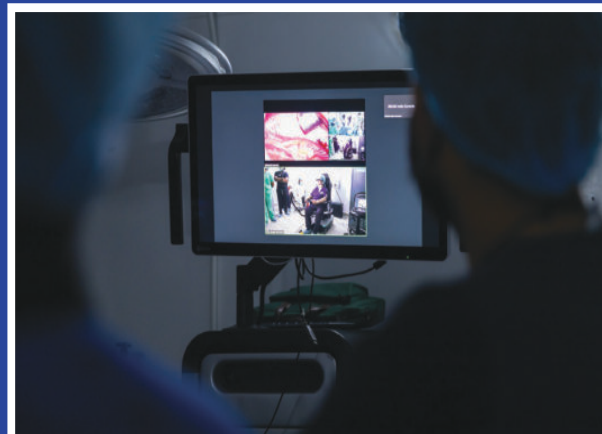
PRESIDENT ALI FEATURED ON COVER OF REGIONAL ENERGY MAGAZINE

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GUYANA AND BARBADOS BREAK REGIONAL GROUND WITH DIGITAL ID TRAVEL SYSTEM

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## FROM US\$229M TO FASTEST GROWTH— PRESIDENT ALI MARKS ECONOMIC LEAP IN DIAMOND JUBILEE ADDRESS



The historic flag-raising ceremony at Fort Island

From a newly independent nation with foreign-controlled industries and limited economic power to a rapidly expanding oil producer, Guyana's 60-year journey was laid out by President Dr. Irfaan Ali during his Diamond Jubilee address, which charted a sharp rise in national wealth, sovereignty and global standing.

Speaking at the historic flag-raising ceremony held for the first time at Fort Island,

the President contrasted the economic reality of 1966 with today's transformed landscape, describing independence as a moment when Guyana had "a new flag and anthem, but not full control of its economy." He said key sectors at the time, including sugar, bauxite, banking and commerce, remained largely under foreign ownership, limiting national benefit from local resources.

President Ali told the gathering that Guyana's economy at independence stood at just US\$229 million, with a per capita income of US\$344, and was heavily dependent on external interests. He said this structure left the country vulnerable and economically constrained despite its political independence.

Sixty years later, he said, Guyana has emerged as one of the

world's fastest-growing economies, citing International Monetary Fund data that placed the country at the top globally for real GDP growth between 2022 and 2024, averaging 47 percent annually. He added that the nation is now projected to approach a per capita

Beyond hydrocarbons, he highlighted what he described as "visible nation-building" including the construction and rehabilitation of more than 10,000 roads and 430 bridges since 2020. These projects, he said, have strengthened

in citizens' daily lives.

However, he cautioned that wealth alone does not define transformation. "A nation is transformed by what it builds for its people," he said, urging careful management of national resources, including savings for future generations through the Natural Resources Fund. He stressed that spending must be guided by discipline, long-term planning and national priorities.

The President also referenced upcoming technological milestones, including a landmark remote cardiac surgery initiative linking Guyana and India, which he said reflects the country's growing integration into global innovation networks.

While celebrating economic progress, President Ali acknowledged ongoing

geopolitical tensions, reaffirming Guyana's sovereignty over the Essequibo region. He described the territory as "indisputably Guyanese", citing the 1899 Arbitral Award and ongoing proceedings at the International Court of Justice.

He said Guyana remains confident in international law while continuing to pursue diplomacy and peaceful resolution. At the same time, he emphasised national unity, calling on citizens to reject division and embrace what he termed the "One Guyana" vision.

The address formed the centrepiece of Guyana's Diamond Jubilee Independence celebrations, staged at Fort Island for the first time, a location the President described as symbolically important to the nation's history and its future.



The historic flag-raising ceremony at Fort Island

income of US\$38,000 by 2028, marking one of the most rapid economic shifts in modern history.

The President attributed this transformation to a combination of natural resource development and national investment strategies, particularly the expansion of the oil and gas sector. He noted that offshore production from the Stabroek Block now exceeds 915,000 barrels per day, positioning Guyana as South America's third-largest oil producer.

connectivity between coastal and hinterland communities and improved access to services that were previously out of reach for many citizens.

President Ali also pointed to major investments in education, housing and healthcare, alongside a national budget that surpassed \$1 trillion for the first time. He described these developments as evidence that economic growth is being translated into tangible improvements



The historic flag-raising ceremony at Fort Island



The historic flag-raising ceremony at Fort Island

## GUYANESE COMPANIES MUST BECOME REGIONAL GIANTS - FINANCE MINISTER



Dr. Singh at the 34th Annual General Meeting of the Private Sector Commission

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh, has urged local businesses to think bigger, innovate faster and position themselves to compete on the regional and global stage as Guyana's economy continues its rapid transformation.

Addressing business leaders, diplomats and members of the corporate community at the 34th Annual General Meeting of the Private Sector Commission (PSC)

recently, Dr Singh said Guyana's unprecedented economic growth has created a unique opportunity for local companies to expand beyond the country's borders.

While acknowledging the remarkable progress made over the past five years, the finance minister stressed that Guyana's full potential remains untapped.

"We are doing a lot better than before, but have exhausted our

potential? I rather suspect that you would agree with me that we have not," he told the gathering at the Guyana Marriott Hotel.

Dr Singh reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting business development, describing the administration as "unapologetically pro-business" because private sector growth translates into jobs, incomes and improved living standards for Guyanese families.

Drawing inspiration from regional corporate giants such as MASSY and ANSA McAL, which evolved from modest beginnings into multinational enterprises, the minister challenged local entrepreneurs to pursue

similar ambitions.

"President Ali's vision for Guyana is a vision where Guyanese companies will be the next big regional conglomerates with a global footprint," he said.

The minister also called for higher standards across the business community, arguing that the level of professionalism and quality demonstrated by Guyanese companies operating in the oil and gas sector should become the benchmark for every industry.

He encouraged businesses to embrace innovation, digitisation and strategic partnerships while improving customer service and operational

efficiency.

PSC Chairman Captain Gerry Gouveia echoed those sentiments, urging companies to collaborate through partnerships and consortia to access larger investment opportunities and compete more effectively internationally.

As Guyana's skyline

changes with new roads, hotels and commercial developments, both leaders agreed that the next phase of national transformation will depend on businesses becoming more innovative, globally competitive and capable of delivering world-class service at home and abroad.



Dr. Singh at the 34th Annual General Meeting of the Private Sector Commission

# PRESIDENT ALI FEATURED ON COVER OF REGIONAL ENERGY MAGAZINE



President Ali headlines regional energy magazine as Guyana's rise gains global attention

Guyana's rapidly growing oil wealth is not the destination, it is the vehicle carrying the country toward a future of greater opportunity, stronger public services and lasting prosperity.

That was the central message from President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali during an in-depth interview featured in a special edition of *Energía e Hidrocarburos Plus* (EH+), a Dominican Republic-based energy publication that has dedicated its latest issue entirely to Guyana's remarkable transformation.

The magazine, whose cover features President Ali, describes Guyana as one of the most influential investment and energy destinations in Latin America and the Caribbean. It was officially launched at

the Pegasus Suites and Corporate Centre in Kingston, Georgetown.

For President Ali, however, the story of Guyana is about far more than oil production figures or economic statistics.

Instead, he spoke of a country using its newfound resources to reshape everyday life through better roads, modern hospitals, improved schools and new economic opportunities for its people.

At the centre of that vision is Vision 2030, the government's long-term development strategy aimed at modernising Guyana while building a more diversified and resilient economy.

Among the projects highlighted was the new Demerara River Bridge, which the president described as a symbol

of a broader national transformation.

**"This project is a critical artery that pumps life into Vision 2030,"** President Ali said, noting that the bridge is designed to connect communities, create opportunities and remove barriers that once slowed development.

Yet the bridge, he stressed, represents only

of offshore oil reserves. Despite the country's unprecedented economic growth, President Ali emphasised that the government remains focused on ensuring that oil revenues benefit both present and future generations.

**"We are defying the so-called 'oil curse' by ensuring that our oil wealth is**

it also provided a rare glimpse into the personal side of leadership.

President Ali revealed that his days begin with prayer, gratitude and reflection before the responsibilities of office take over. He also reflected on lessons from his parents, including one that continues to shape his approach to public service: "Service is the rent you pay for your place on Earth."

Looking toward 2030, he envisions a Guyana that balances economic growth with environmental sustainability, stronger public institutions and deeper regional partnerships.

Yet beneath the confidence often associated with leadership, the president acknowledged the responsibility that comes with guiding a nation through such a transformative period.

**"The weight of expectation is a constant companion,"** he said. **"Behind the confidence is the profound fear of failing the hope in a child's eyes."**

That sense of responsibility, he suggested, remains the driving force behind Guyana's ongoing transformation.



President Ali headlines regional energy magazine as Guyana's rise gains global attention



President Ali headlines regional energy magazine as Guyana's rise gains global attention

one part of a much larger undertaking.

**"Beyond bridges, we are building the foundational pillars of a new Guyana,"** he said. **"We are not just building infrastructure; we are building the skeleton of a new nation."**

The interview comes at a time when Guyana continues to attract global attention following the discovery of more than 11 billion barrels

**a down payment on our children's future, not a lottery ticket for today,"** he said.

According to the president, the Natural Resource Fund plays a critical role in that effort, safeguarding petroleum revenues and directing investments toward infrastructure, healthcare, education and economic diversification.

While much of the interview focused on national development,

The special edition's Editor-in-Chief, Idalia Cabrera, described the publication as a historic milestone. It marks the first time a sitting foreign president has appeared on the cover of a specialised Dominican magazine.

Cabrera said the edition reflects a Caribbean region undergoing significant change, driven by stronger regional partnerships, new opportunities in the energy sector and a shared vision for sustainable development.

The publication also explores the growing relationship between Guyana and the Dominican Republic, highlighting expanding opportunities in trade, investment, logistics and energy cooperation.

## GUYANA ENTERS EU-FUNDED CYBER COMPETENCE NETWORK



Guyana's move to join LAC4 will strengthen cybersecurity capacity

Guyana is stepping up its digital security capabilities after formally joining the Latin America and Caribbean Cyber Competence Centre (LAC4), gaining access to advanced training, forensic tools, and regional expertise aimed at strengthening

national cyber resilience. The agreement was signed at the Office of the Prime Minister in Georgetown, marking Guyana as the 19th member of the EU-funded initiative that connects countries across Latin America, the Caribbean, and

Europe.

Through its membership, Guyana will now have access to a state-of-the-art hybrid training facility, a digital forensic laboratory, and a cyber range, tools designed to simulate real-world cyberattacks and help professionals respond effectively to digital threats.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips said the partnership comes at a critical time as Guyana expands its digital services and modernises public systems.

**"As our nation continues to embrace technology and expand digital services, we recognise that this progress must be supported by strong**

**cyber resilience and effective risk management,"** he said.

He added that joining LAC4 strengthens Guyana's ability to build technical capacity while deepening cooperation with regional and international partners.

Head of LAC4, Leonardo Daniel Ortega Prudencio, welcomed Guyana's entry, noting that the country has already taken part in more than 120 activities with the centre since 2022, including work on national cyber emergency planning.

General Manager of the National Data Management Authority (NDMA), Christopher Deen, said the partnership aligns with Guyana's broader cybersecurity

strategy, which focuses on awareness, preparedness, and strengthening public sector defences.

The LAC4 centre, based in the Dominican

Republic, was established in 2022 to support regional cybersecurity development through training, research, and collaboration.



Guyana's move to join LAC4 will strengthen cybersecurity capacity

## GUYANA AND BARBADOS BREAK REGIONAL GROUNDWITH DIGITAL ID TRAVEL SYSTEM



President Ali, Prime Minister Mia Mottley at the presser to announce the new arrangement

Citizens of Guyana and Barbados will soon be able to travel between both countries without passports, using only digital identification cards in what leaders are calling a historic breakthrough in Caribbean integration.

Speaking at a press conference at the Guyana National Stadium alongside Prime Minister Mia Mottley, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali announced that the new arrangement will officially take effect on July 1, 2026.

**“From July 1st**

**you can forget your passport at home and travel with your digital ID card to Barbados and same from Barbados to Guyana,”** President Ali declared.

The initiative marks one of the most ambitious digital integration measures ever undertaken between two CARICOM nations and forms part of wider efforts to modernise border systems, improve regional mobility and deepen cooperation between the two countries.

President Ali said the system is already operational, but airlines were given additional time to align their procedures before the official launch date.

For ordinary citizens, the change promises to make regional travel easier, faster and more accessible, including for persons who may not currently hold passports.

**“And even if a person does not have a passport but has a digital ID card, they can now travel between the two countries,”** Prime Minister Mottley said.

The Barbadian leader described the initiative as a **“60th anniversary gift”** to the people of both nations as Guyana and Barbados celebrate six decades of Independence.

**“We’ve only just begun,”** she added.

Beyond travel, both leaders outlined plans for the digital ID system to eventually support healthcare integration between the two countries. President Ali explained that in medical emergencies, the technology could allow authorised healthcare professionals overseas to securely access a patient’s medical records.

The two governments are also advancing discussions to digitally connect their financial systems, creating new opportunities for commerce, investment and business expansion between Guyanese and Barbadians.

Prime Minister Mottley praised the rapid work carried out by technical teams from both countries, noting that the system was completed in

under six weeks through collaboration with regional security agencies and technology partners.

Among those credited for driving the initiative was Zulfikar Ally, Guyana’s Minister of Public Service, Government Efficiency and Implementation, who said the project reflects the government’s broader push toward digital transformation, efficiency and stronger

security systems.

The announcement came amid Guyana’s Diamond Jubilee Independence celebrations but both leaders made clear the initiative is intended to become a permanent feature of Caribbean cooperation.

For thousands of Guyanese and Barbadians with family, business and cultural ties spanning both countries, the era of passport-free Caribbean travel is no longer a future ambition, it is weeks away from becoming reality.



President Ali, Prime Minister Mia Mottley at the presser to announce the new arrangement



Brazil’s Ambassador to Guyana, Maria Cristina de Castro Martins

As trucks cross the Takutu Bridge carrying goods in both directions and businesses explore new markets beyond traditional partners, the Guyana-Brazil relationship is entering a new chapter; one defined by record trade, stronger connectivity and shared economic ambitions.

Trade between the neighbouring countries has surged from approximately US\$58 million in 2020 to US\$1 billion in 2026, a remarkable increase that reflects deepening



Guyana’s Foreign Secretary, Robert Persaud

economic ties and growing collaboration across multiple sectors.

Brazil’s Ambassador to Guyana, Maria Cristina de Castro Martins, revealed the figures during an interview on 104.1 Guyana Lite FM, noting that increased activity in energy, mining, infrastructure and construction has been a major driver of the expansion.

**“The trade relations between both countries have expanded**

## GUYANA-BRAZIL CROSS BORDER TRADE REACHES US\$1 BILLION

**significantly in recent years. The trade flow, which was around US\$58 million in 2020, now reached US\$1 billion,”** the ambassador said.

Guyana’s Foreign Secretary, Robert Persaud, described the growth as evidence of the strong political and economic relationship shared by the two nations.

**“The increase in trade between Guyana and Brazil reflects the political will by both sides to maintain good neighbourly relations through enhanced cooperation in all areas, including trade,”** Persaud said.

By 2024, Brazil

had become Guyana’s fifth-largest source of imports and seventh-largest export market, supported by growing engagement between governments and private sector stakeholders through trade missions and business partnerships.

Persaud noted that global supply chain disruptions have also encouraged Guyanese businesses to seek alternative suppliers and markets as the country continues to expand its housing, agriculture and infrastructure programmes.

While acknowledging that the trade balance remains heavily in Brazil’s favour, he said both countries continue

to work together to address technical and phytosanitary barriers that limit Guyanese exports.

Looking ahead, Guyana and Brazil are investing in stronger transport, energy and digital connections. Projects such as the Linden-Lethem Road,

the proposed deep-water port and the upgrade of the Lethem airport are expected to further strengthen commerce, investment and regional integration, creating new opportunities for businesses and communities on both sides of the border.



Guyana and Brazil are investing in stronger transport, energy and digital connections

## HOME SUPPORT INTRODUCED FOR VULNERABLE CASH GRANT APPLICANTS

The government is stepping up efforts to ensure vulnerable citizens are not left behind in the rollout of the \$100,000 cash grant programme.

Shut-ins, pensioners, persons living with disabilities and others needing assistance can now request support

through the official cash grant website by selecting the “Get Help” option.

The initiative is aimed at helping eligible persons who may face challenges accessing services or completing the registration process on their own.

Applicants are

required to provide basic information, including their name, telephone number and address, before selecting the type of assistance they need. Support is available for home visits for persons living with disabilities, opening bank accounts, applying for Tax Identification

Numbers (TINs), and registering for electronic identification (eID) cards.

Once the information is submitted, government representatives will contact applicants within a few days to provide assistance.

The move comes

as the nationwide distribution of the cash grant continues to expand. Nearly 400,000 Guyanese have already received their \$100,000 cash grant.

Officials say the additional support measures are intended to make the process more accessible and ensure eligible citizens can benefit from the initiative regardless of their circumstances.



A beneficiary signing for their cash grant

## GUYANA PULLS OFF HISTORIC 20,000KM HEART SURGERY



Scene from the landmark procedure, a Coronary Artery Bypass Graft

Guyana etched its name into global medical history on Independence Day after doctors based at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) successfully performed the world's longest-distance telesurgery, operating on a patient nearly 20,000 kilometres away in India. The landmark procedure, a Coronary Artery Bypass Graft, was carried out at 6:00 AM on May 26 using the state-of-the-art SSI Mantra 3 robotic surgical

But for Guyana, the achievement represented far more than a medical first.

Addressing a news conference at the Guyana National Stadium, President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali described the breakthrough as a defining moment in the country's healthcare transformation and announced that the robotic system would now be renamed "Mantra Freedom 60" in honour of

Guyana's Diamond Jubilee Independence celebrations.

"Whether you do your cardiac surgery or surgery in urology or gynaecology, surgeon Freedom 60 will be at your side," President Ali declared.

Behind the symbolism, however, lies a much larger national ambition. President Ali said Guyana's investment was never intended to be a one-off historic moment, but the

foundation for a regional centre of excellence in robotic surgery and advanced healthcare training.

Under a partnership with the SSI Mantra ecosystem, Guyana will now establish an international robotic surgery training hub at GPHC, allowing medical teams from across the Caribbean to train locally using the same advanced technology available in some of India's leading medical institutions.

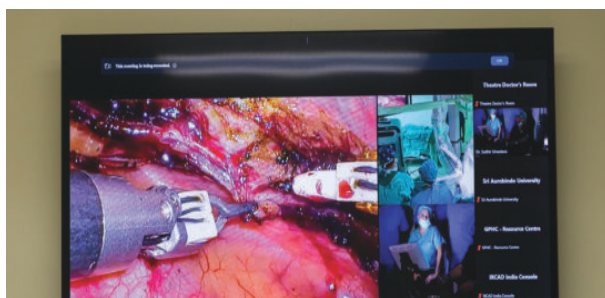
Within hours of the record-breaking telesurgery, Guyanese doctors made history again.

A local surgical team led by Dr Hemraj Ramcharran, alongside Dr Bibi Hussain and Dr Jaganand Ramnarine, successfully completed a robotic inguinal hernia

repair at GPHC, the first robotic surgery ever performed in Guyana and the English-speaking Caribbean by a Guyanese surgeon.

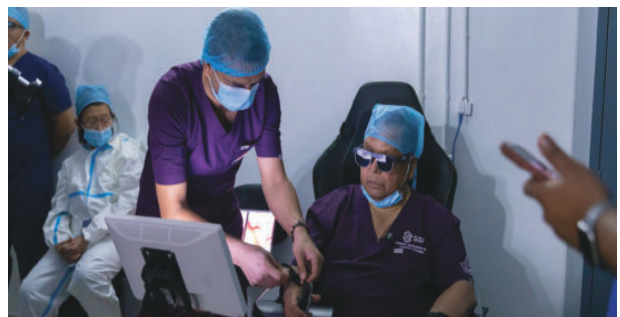
Later that same day, Dr Srivastava carried out a robotic atrial septal defect repair on a Guyanese patient, further demonstrating the expanding capabilities now available in the country's healthcare system.

Just months ago, robotic surgery in Guyana was only an ambition. Now, the country is positioning itself at the forefront of medical innovation in the Caribbean, transforming from a healthcare importer into a regional leader in digital medicine, robotic surgery and specialised care.



Scene from the landmark procedure, a Coronary Artery Bypass Graft

## GPHC BUILDS FIRST WAVE OF ROBOTIC SURGERY SPECIALISTS THROUGH GLOBAL TRAINING DRIVE



Seven doctors have already completed specialised training abroad in robotic surgery

The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) is strengthening its pool of locally trained specialists as it expands its robotic surgery programme, with a strong focus on building long-term medical capacity through international training and hands-on experience.

Chief Executive Officer Robbie Rambarran said the

priority is now centred on developing Guyanese doctors into fully certified robotic surgery specialists who can lead procedures, train peers, and sustain the programme locally.

Speaking on the *Starting Point* podcast, Rambarran said seven doctors have already completed specialised training abroad in robotic surgery, covering fields such as general

surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, and neurology. More training placements are currently underway as part of a structured expansion plan.

He explained that the training model is designed to ensure sustainability by combining overseas instruction with local mentorship from visiting international experts known as proctors, who will work alongside Guyanese surgeons in operating theatres.

"We are building a system where our doctors are not just users of the technology, but trainers and leaders in it," Rambarran said.

The training drive follows a series of

landmark procedures that demonstrated Guyana's entry into advanced robotic surgery, including a historic telesurgery where a surgeon in Georgetown operated on a patient located in India, as well as successful local robotic procedures such as hernia repair and cardiac interventions performed at GPHC.

Rambarran said these early successes have reinforced the need to rapidly expand training so that more local doctors can independently perform and eventually teach these procedures.

He noted that surgeons are currently being trained in countries such as India, where they receive direct

exposure to complex robotic systems under specialist supervision. Upon return, they are expected to begin performing similar procedures locally under guided mentorship.

The programme also includes real-time teaching opportunities during surgeries, allowing international experts to guide local teams as they build confidence and technical precision.

According to Rambarran, robotic surgery offers significant benefits, including improved accuracy, reduced surgical trauma, lower infection risk, and faster patient recovery times.

"Patients who would normally

stay in hospital for several days can now recover much faster," he said.

He added that GPHC is also exploring the possibility of positioning Guyana as a regional training hub for robotic surgery, as part of its broader push to modernise the health sector.



Seven doctors have already completed specialised training abroad in robotic surgery

## NEW GOVT APP TURNING COMPLAINTS INTO ACTION

Just months after its launch, the Citizens Connect App is already changing how residents across Guyana report and resolve community issues.

Since March, approximately 1,200 concerns have been submitted through the platform, with more than 875 already resolved. Residents have used the app to report a wide range of issues, including uncollected

garbage, blocked drains, damaged infrastructure, house lot concerns and questions relating to cash grants.

Minister of Public Service, Government Efficiency, and Implementation, Zulfikar Ally, said many of the reports were directed to the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development because of the nature of the complaints being raised by citizens.

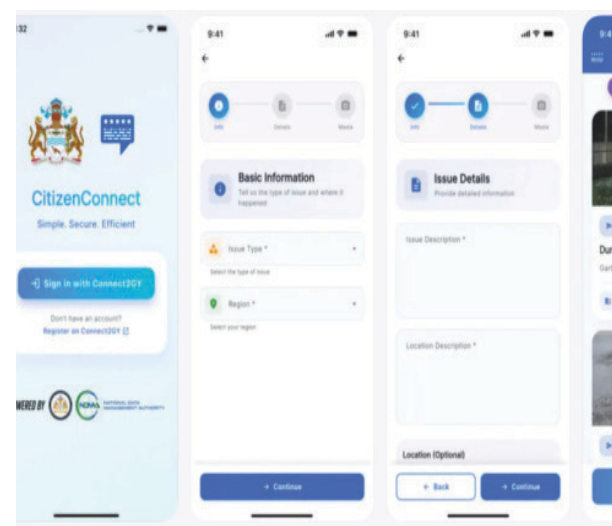
To improve response times, dedicated teams have been assigned within ministries to monitor reports, communicate with residents and provide updates on the progress of issues submitted through the app.

The platform allows users to send reports directly from their mobile devices while uploading photographs and location details to help authorities identify

problems more quickly and accurately.

Residents are also able to track the status of their reports in real time through a built-in feedback system.

Minister Ally described the app as a transformative tool for governance and public service delivery, noting that it is helping to create stronger connections between citizens and government agencies.



## GUYANA'S GROWTH STORY FAR FROM OVER, INVESTORS TOLD



Minister of Natural Resources Vickram Bharrat

As Guyana moves closer to producing more than one million barrels of oil per day, government officials are urging citizens and businesses to position themselves now for the next phase of the country's economic transformation.

That message resonated throughout the opening of the fourth annual Local Content Summit, where government leaders, business owners, investors and industry stakeholders gathered



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

to discuss how Guyanese can continue to benefit from one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

Held at the Houston Event Centre, Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, the summit focused not only on the country's growing oil production but also on the opportunities being created across a wide range of sectors.

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

said the remarkable transformation already taking place in Guyana is only the beginning.

Addressing local entrepreneurs and investors, Dr Singh encouraged them to think beyond current successes and prepare for even greater opportunities as production continues to expand.

Guyana currently produces more than 900,000 barrels of oil per day from offshore developments including Liza I, Liza II, Payara and Yellowtail. With the Uaru project expected to come on stream next year, production is projected to surpass one million barrels per day before the end of 2026.

For local businesses, Dr Singh said, the message is simple: opportunity is growing and Guyanese must be ready to capture it.

**"Imagine the**

**transformation we've already achieved and the business opportunities already created. Think about what the next five years hold,"** he told participants.

He pointed to the success of the country's Local Content framework, which has enabled more than 2,500 Guyanese vendors to secure over US\$2.5 billion in procurement opportunities since oil production began in 2019.

Importantly, he stressed that opportunities extend far beyond the categories specifically identified in local content legislation.

**"If you can produce competitively, there is a business opportunity for you,"** he said.

Minister of Natural Resources Vickram Bharrat echoed that

optimism, describing Guyana's pace of development as unprecedented.

While acknowledging the significant role oil and gas have played in driving economic growth, he emphasised that strong leadership, strategic planning and effective management remain critical to sustaining development.

The Local Content Summit, now in its fourth year, continues to serve as a key platform connecting government, industry

leaders, financiers and entrepreneurs with emerging opportunities.

Under the theme "From Policy to Prosperity: Unlocking Opportunities Through Collaboration", the two-day event highlighted a growing reality in Guyana: as the country's oil production rises, so too do the opportunities for Guyanese

businesses, workers and communities to share in the benefits of national development.



The fourth annual Local Content Summit

## DIASPORA BONDS, STOCK EXCHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT BANK TO EXPAND GUYANESE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Guyana is preparing to roll out a series of major financial initiatives aimed at expanding local ownership and giving citizens at home and abroad greater opportunities to invest in the country's rapid economic transformation.

Among the headline measures is a planned diaspora bond, which will allow Guyanese living overseas to invest directly in national infrastructure projects while earning a fixed return. President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali said the initiative is designed to both mobilise capital and strengthen ties with the global Guyanese community.

Funds raised through



President Dr Irfaan Ali

the bond will be directed toward key development projects such as roads, bridges and other major infrastructure works, forming part of the government's broader national development agenda.

The announcement was made during the Local Content Summit Networking Reception at the Four Points

by Sheraton, where President Ali outlined a wider push to ensure that local participation becomes a defining feature of Guyana's economic model.

**"We are now moving into an era where we want local content to be structured in the everyday evolution of our economy,"** he said, adding that new opportunities for participation would be rolled out in the coming weeks.

One of those initiatives is the planned Junior Stock Exchange, which will enable individuals and local businesses to invest and trade shares, including in the gold sector. The President noted that at

least one major developer has already committed to reserving shares for Guyanese investors.

He also confirmed that legislation for a Guyana Development Bank will soon be presented to Parliament. The institution is expected to support small and micro enterprises while encouraging the formation of business clusters that can tap into emerging sectors of the economy.

Beyond finance, President Ali pointed to ongoing energy investments, including the gas-to-energy project in the Wales Development Zone. He said upcoming fertiliser and gas bottling plants are being structured to allow direct local

investment, alongside planned data centres that will involve both local and regional stakeholders.

The President said these initiatives reflect a broader vision of economic inclusion, allowing Guyanese to participate more directly in national growth while also expanding

opportunities across the Caribbean, including Barbados, Grenada and Antigua.

**"We are entering into an exciting period of transformation,"** he said, noting that government is also exploring ways to extend local content policies into financial services and insurance.



Local Content Summit at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, Houston, East Bank Demerara

## 38 ARRESTED AS AUTHORITIES SHUT DOWN SIX ILLEGAL MINING OPERATIONS IN MAZARUNI

A major enforcement operation in the Mazaruni Mining District has resulted in the closure of six illegal mining operations and the arrest of 38 individuals, as authorities intensify efforts to protect Guyana's natural resources.

The exercise was carried out by the

Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), through its Corps of Wardens, in collaboration with the Guyana Police Force. The operation followed reports of unlawful mining activities being conducted within a quarry area in Region Seven.

During the raid,

officers seized several pieces of equipment and machinery believed to have been used to support the illegal operations. Authorities have since established surveillance measures in the area to prevent a return of unlawful activities and to ensure continued compliance with mining regulations.

The Ministry of Natural Resources reiterated that illegal mining will not be tolerated, stressing that the government remains committed to identifying, disrupting and prosecuting all unlawful activities within the mining sector.



GGMC shut down six illegal operations within the Mazaruni Mining District in Region Seven

## GUYANA AMONG FIRST CARIBBEAN NATIONS TO ACTIVATE LANDMARK ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AGREEMENT

Guyana has strengthened its position as a regional leader in the fight against money laundering, terrorist financing and organised financial crime after becoming one of the first Caribbean countries to sign and operationalise a landmark regional cooperation agreement.

The agreement, signed during the 62nd Plenary and Working Group Meetings of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, establishes a formal framework for countries to share intelligence and coordinate action on targeted financial sanctions linked to terrorism financing and proliferation financing.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall SC signed the Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Guyana's behalf, reaffirming the

country's commitment to strengthening its Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) systems in line with international standards set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

The agreement is designed to allow participating countries to rapidly and securely exchange information on individuals and entities being considered for sanctions related to terrorist financing activities. Officials say the operationalisation of the MOU marks a major milestone for the Caribbean, improving the region's ability to identify and disrupt financial threats through greater collaboration.

The MOU also strengthens regional coordination on intelligence-sharing, compliance monitoring and the implementation of targeted sanctions while promoting international best

practices aimed at protecting the integrity of the Caribbean financial system.

Guyana's delegation to the CFATF meetings included representatives from several key agencies involved in the country's AML/CFT framework, among them the Bank of Guyana, the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), the Special Organised Crime Unit (SOCU), the Guyana Revenue Authority and the Guyana Gold Board.

During discussions, Attorney General Nandlall highlighted the need for stronger judicial understanding of AML/CFT legislation across the region, particularly in areas relating to asset recovery, confiscation and financial crime prosecutions.

He noted that conviction rates and successful forfeiture of criminal proceeds remain low throughout the Caribbean and stressed the importance of ongoing judicial

training to improve the interpretation and application of financial crime laws.

**"Perhaps the time is ripe to invite nominees of the Judiciary to attend Plenary meetings, as this would give them first-hand insight into our international obligations,"** the Attorney General stated.

Guyana also used the meetings to prepare for upcoming compliance reviews under the CFATF follow-up process. The country is scheduled to undergo a Follow-Up Report assessment in November 2026 and a re-rating process in 2027 as part of its ongoing evaluation under FATF standards.

Officials say Guyana remains well positioned following its positive mutual evaluation in 2024 and continues to strengthen its technical and institutional capacity through regional partnerships and training initiatives.



Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall SC signed the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall SC signed the Multilateral MOU on behalf Guyana



Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall SC signed the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall SC signed the Multilateral MOU on behalf Guyana

As part of those efforts, Guyana is expected to host several important regional AML/CFT activities in 2026, including the ARIN-CARIB Annual

Conference and a CFATF Assessors' Training Programme aimed at enhancing regional expertise in financial crime investigations and compliance monitoring.



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

Guyana's court system is expected to receive further reinforcement through new judicial appointments, as

## NEW JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS PLANNED AS GUYANA PUSHES TO IMPROVE COURT EFFICIENCY

authorities work to address concerns over case backlogs and delays in the legal system.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, said the expansion forms part of a wider strategy to strengthen judicial capacity and improve the pace at which cases are heard across the courts.

Speaking on his "Issues in the News" programme, Nandlall pointed to progress already made at the

Court of Appeal, where additional judges have been appointed to help ease pressure and accelerate hearings.

**"I do know that since we have appointed, I believe, 10 judges to that court, we have one vacancy left... appeals are being heard every day or at frequent intervals,"** he said.

He explained that the increased number of judges has allowed the Court of Appeal to operate with greater

efficiency, including running hearings in multiple courtrooms and issuing more frequent case listings for litigants and attorneys.

AG Nandlall said the Attorney General's Chambers has also observed the improved pace of proceedings, noting that matters are now moving through the system more quickly than before.

**"So don't worry, the backlog is being addressed now,"** he added.

The Attorney General also addressed delays affecting land court matters, acknowledging public concern but stressed that additional appointments have already been made to strengthen that division.

He said further judicial appointments are expected, including the elevation of two current land court judges to the High Court bench, which will create further vacancies to be filled.

According to AG

Nandlall, the Judicial Service Commission is expected to move ahead with appointing additional land court judges as part of ongoing efforts to enhance capacity.

He said the overall goal remains ensuring that the judiciary is adequately resourced to reduce delays, clear backlogs, and improve access to timely justice for litigants across Guyana.

## LAW SCHOOL PROJECT AT UG MOVES FORWARD WITH DESIGN TENDER PROCESS



Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC (third from left), along with UG officials at the sod turning event

Plans for a long-anticipated regional law school at the University of Guyana have moved a step closer to reality, following the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) by the Ministry of Legal Affairs for the design and supervision of the facility.

The ministry is inviting qualified consulting firms with the necessary technical expertise and experience

to submit both technical and financial proposals for the "Design and Supervision for the Construction of the Law School".

According to the notice, submissions must be delivered to the Chairman of the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB), Ministry of Finance, Main and Urquhart Streets, Georgetown, by

09:00hrs on June 18, 2026. The proposals will be opened publicly the same day in the presence of bidders or their representatives.

The move follows earlier announcements by Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall, SC, that construction of the law school at the Turkeyen Campus is expected to commence in 2026.

Guyana received approval from the Council of Legal Education in September 2025 to establish the institution, ending years of regional discussions on expanding legal education access in the country.

Once completed, the law school is expected to serve not only Guyanese students but also learners from across the Caribbean, offering more accessible and affordable pathways into the legal profession.

## ENERGY EXPANSION COULD UNLOCK ALUMINA REFINERY AND MANUFACTURING GROWTH IN BERBICE



Dr Ashni Singh, during the launch of a special edition of the EH+ Energy and Hydrocarbon Magazine at the Pegasus Suites & Corporate Centre in Georgetown

For decades, Guyana's bauxite has left its shores largely as a raw commodity. In the future, however, that mineral could be processed at home, creating new industries, jobs and economic opportunities for generations of Guyanese. That vision was

According to Dr Singh, the government's expanding energy infrastructure could pave the way for the establishment of an alumina refinery in Berbice, allowing Guyana to process its own bauxite resources rather than exporting them in raw form.

**“Contemplate for a moment that we're speaking about enough electricity once Berbice is built out to be able to have an industrial and petrochemical complex at the mouth of the Berbice River that will include the capability**

**of processing our bauxite resources with the construction of an alumina refinery,”** he said.

An alumina refinery converts bauxite ore into aluminium oxide, the essential raw material used in the production of aluminium. Such a facility would represent a major step in Guyana's push toward value-added manufacturing.

Dr Singh explained that planned projects, including a second gas pipeline and expanded power generation capacity, are expected to provide the energy needed to support large-scale industrial

development.

Beyond mineral processing, the expanded energy network could also attract investments in manufacturing, petrochemicals and information technology.

As Guyana continues its economic

transformation, the minister said affordable and reliable energy will be central to unlocking new industries and ensuring that more value from the country's natural resources remains within its borders.



Dr Ashni Singh, during the launch of a special edition of the EH+ Energy and Hydrocarbon Magazine at the Pegasus Suites & Corporate Centre in Georgetown

## LOCAL CONTENT LEGISLATION CHANGED ECONOMIC FUTURE FOR GUYANESE BUSINESSES - KATHY SMITH



President of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kathy Smith

President of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kathy Smith, said Guyana's local content legislation has fundamentally transformed the country's private sector, allowing thousands of small businesses to expand, create jobs and enter industries once dominated by foreign

are growing tremendously,” Smith said, pointing to businesses that started small but have since expanded operations, hired workers and invested in equipment, property and infrastructure.

According to Smith, the legislation ensured that Guyanese companies and professionals were not sidelined as the country's oil and gas sector rapidly developed.

**“What we would have had walking around in Guyana was a lot of executives who are working for international companies, who are giving all their capabilities and capacity, and those**

**strengths would have been taken back out of our country,”** she explained.

Instead, Smith said the policy created opportunities for Guyanese ownership, partnerships and participation across the energy sector and the wider economy.

Under the legislation, certain oil and gas ventures require majority Guyanese ownership, a measure Smith said has encouraged local companies to partner with major international firms from North America, South America and Europe.

**“If it wasn't for the local content legislation, that would not have**

**happened,”** she stated.

Smith noted that the impact is now being felt far beyond the oil industry itself. Revenues and opportunities generated through the sector are increasingly flowing into construction, tourism, transportation, hospitality and information and communications technology.

She said small restaurants, cafés and tour businesses are emerging across the country, while more women and young people are entering construction and contracting fields once considered out of reach.

**“We saw last year about 3,000 plus small businesses, small and emerging**

**contractors, became solid contractors on the road, building bridges and roads and all of these things,”** she said.

Despite the rapid growth, Smith warned that labour shortages are becoming a major challenge as the economy continues to expand.

**“We do not have enough people to build out as the private sector grows,”** she cautioned.

Still, Smith maintained that the legislation has permanently altered the economic landscape for Guyanese citizens, turning oil wealth into opportunities for local ownership, entrepreneurship and long-term investment.

## OKO WEST PROJECT TO CREATE OVER 2,100 JOBS BY END OF 2026

Hundreds more jobs are on the horizon for Region Seven residents as the Oko West Gold Project continues its rapid expansion, with employment expected to grow to more than 2,100 workers by the end of next year.

Speaking during a community outreach in Bartica, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali said the project is already creating opportunities for Guyanese workers and businesses while laying the foundation

for long-term economic growth in the region.

**“Currently, the workforce stands at 1,193 employees, of which 946 are Guyanese. This is projected to increase to 2,100 by December 2026,”** the president told residents.

For many families in Region Seven, those numbers represent more than statistics. They signal new opportunities for employment, training and income in communities that are

increasingly benefiting from large-scale investments.

The Oko West Gold Project, being developed by Canadian company G Mining Ventures, is generating demand for workers across a range of fields, including construction, transportation, logistics and technical trades.

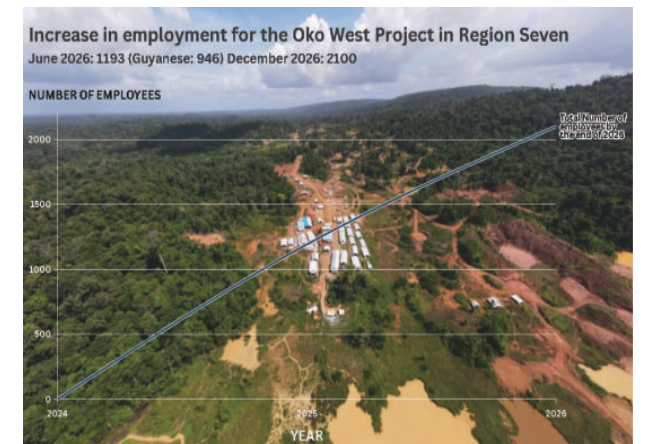
The impact is already being felt beyond the mine site itself.

One example is the local construction of a tug and barge that will

fabricators, electricians, mechanics and other skilled tradespersons.

President Ali said the government's goal is to ensure that major investments create opportunities throughout the economy rather than benefiting only a single sector.

**“We want Guyanese and especially the people of Region Seven to be the primary beneficiaries of the opportunities being created,”** he said.



The president also provided an update on key infrastructure linked to the project. He disclosed that the US\$1.5 billion Oko Wharf in the Kartabo-Batavia area is expected to become operational this month, with loading

and offloading activities scheduled to begin by August.

Additional facilities, including offices, camp accommodations, a welcome centre and sports facilities, are expected to be completed by September.

# MAJOR BILLS, SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET TABLED AS PARLIAMENT MEETS

A packed legislative agenda took center stage in the National Assembly as the government tabled a massive \$54.9 billion supplementary budget alongside several major legislative reforms. Key developments included moves to restore benefits for former presidents, the creation of a new development bank for small businesses, and a fiscal update showing the Natural Resource Fund has climbed to US\$4.1 billion. Members of Parliament were also briefed on the final stages of the ICJ border dispute case with Venezuela and ongoing institutional anti-corruption reforms.

## Govt moves to restore full benefits for former presidents



Senior Finance Minister tabling Guyana Development Bank Bill 2026

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Singh, has reintroduced legislation to restore a broader package of benefits for former Presidents of Guyana.

The Former Presidents (Benefits and Other Facilities) Bill 2026 seeks to repeal provisions introduced by the APNU/AFC administration in 2015, returning the benefits framework to the standard established in 2009. Under the proposed law, former Heads of State would again receive state-covered utility expenses, household staff, transportation, security, and comprehensive medical coverage for themselves and their dependents.

The government maintains that the presidency carries

lifelong responsibilities that extend beyond a leader's term, noting that former presidents frequently undertake representational duties and require ongoing security. The administration stated that the bill aims to establish a clear, predictable, and equal standard for all former presidents while preserving the dignity of the nation's highest office.

## Parliament asked to approve additional \$54.9B for key development programmes



Minister of Local Government and Regional Development Priya Manickchand, responded to questions regarding reports of the Local Government Commission

Dr. Singh presented a \$54.9 billion supplementary financial paper to the National Assembly to accelerate the implementation of national development projects.

The single largest allocation of \$19.1 billion is designated for the Office of the Prime Minister to fund the Gas-to-Energy Project, which aims to significantly lower local electricity costs upon completion.

Other major allocations include; \$17.5 billion for the housing sector to expand ongoing works, supplementing the \$159.1 billion already allocated in Budget 2026. Also covered are \$8.5 billion for road and drainage infrastructure under the Ministry of Public Works; and \$8.3 billion for agriculture, providing targeted support to the Guyana Rice Development Board, the Guyana

Sugar Corporation (GUYSUCO), and the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority.

Additional funds will support coastal airstrip maintenance, water interventions, and the Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit (CANU).

## NRF balance climbs to US\$4.1B



Minister of Home Affairs Hon Oneidge Walrond responding to questions in the National Assembly

In compliance with the NRF Act 2021, Dr. Singh presented the latest notification of petroleum revenues paid into the Natural Resource Fund (NRF) between December 30, 2025, and March 31, 2026. The notification was officially gazetted on April 2, 2026.

The government reported that the total NRF balance reached US\$4.1 billion by the end of April. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently commended Guyana's progress in strengthening NRF governance and fiscal transparency. For the year 2026, Parliament has approved total fund withdrawals amounting to US\$2.374 billion.

## Govt tables Bill to establish Guyana Development Bank for SMEs

Dr. Singh tabled the Guyana Development Bank Bill 2026, paving the way for a new state-backed institution designed to expand credit access for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The proposed bank will offer interest-free micro-credit loans of up

to \$3 million, alongside dedicated mentorship and business training. President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, speaking during a recent outreach in Region Seven, noted that the bank aims to drive community development and empower citizens to form cooperatives or consortia for larger economic ventures.

The initiative aligns with broader efforts to deepen financial inclusion amid national economic expansion. Government data indicates that private sector credit has more than doubled since 2020, while deposits have risen by over 130%. Concurrently, non-performing loans have dropped sharply, reflecting improved financial sector stability.

## Legal Affairs Minister updated volumes covering 2012 - 2022 legislation



Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, handed over the Revised Edition of the Laws of Guyana

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Anil Nandlall, formally presented the 2022 Revised Edition of the Laws of Guyana to the National Assembly. This consolidated legal reference integrates all legislation enacted and amended between 2012 and December 31, 2022.

Minister Nandlall described the revision as an essential exercise in maintaining an accurate and accessible body of law, ensuring all changes are fully integrated into principal Acts for use by the judiciary, legal practitioners, and the

public. He emphasised that preserving previous editions remains critical for historical research and interpreting legislative intent.

## Guyana confident of ICJ victory in Venezuela border case - PM Phillips



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips delivering the statement

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips expressed firm confidence that Guyana will prevail in its border dispute case against Venezuela at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), with a final judgment expected between late 2026 and early 2027.

Addressing the National Assembly, PM Phillips confirmed that all written and oral submissions have concluded, marking the end of eight years of legal proceedings. Oral hearings wrapped up on May 11 in The Hague, and the court is currently deliberating. Rulings are typically delivered within six to eight months of consecutive hearings closing.

The Prime Minister stressed that the ICJ's ruling will be final and legally binding on both nations under international law, reiterating Guyana's commitment to the peaceful resolution of state disputes through the rules-based international order. Guyana's legal team has strongly defended the validity of the 1899 Arbitral Award, which established the permanent boundary.

## Parliament told of expanded oversight and anti-corruption measures



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, Gail Teixeira, reported steady progress in Guyana's anti-corruption framework, citing enhanced institutional coordination and legal reforms despite an absence of long-term statistical data.

Minister Teixeira noted that inter-agency cooperation agreements have tripled over the last two years. Key oversight bodies, including the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA), national procurement bodies, and the Integrity Commission, are now utilising expanded compliance systems and data-sharing protocols.

Responding to opposition scrutiny regarding the effectiveness of these measures, the Minister highlighted that the 2022 framework prioritises legislative reform, digital transformation, and public education, adding that amendments to the Integrity Commission Act are currently being prepared. Minister Teixeira defended the current strategy while rejecting the previous SARA model as costly and ineffective, leading to a heated exchange regarding asset declaration compliance.

## DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS DRIVE RECORD ARRIVALS



More than 56,000 passengers arrived in Guyana during the Independence period

The excitement of Guyana's 60th Independence Anniversary was felt long before the celebrations began, as tens of thousands of visitors streamed through the country's airports to take part in the historic Diamond Jubilee festivities.

More than 56,000 passengers arrived in Guyana during the Independence period,

marking one of the largest travel surges in the nation's history. At the centre of that movement was the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA), which processed approximately 48,500 arriving passengers, reaffirming its role as the country's primary gateway.

The figures represent a remarkable 16 per cent increase over the same period in 2025, driven

largely by thousands of returning Guyanese and international visitors eager to participate in the milestone celebrations.

For many arrivals, the journey was about more than attending events. It was an opportunity to reconnect with family, revisit childhood communities and celebrate six decades of national achievement alongside fellow Guyanese.

The influx coincided with a packed calendar of activities, including the National Flag-Raising Ceremony, the One Guyana Flag Concert, the Taste of Guyana festival and a series of cultural showcases and international performances that attracted visitors from across the region and beyond.

Despite challenges

facing the global aviation industry, including rising fuel costs and route reductions in some markets, Guyana continued to see growing confidence from international airlines, which expanded seating capacity to the country during the year.

Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation Deodat Indar said the strong passenger numbers reflect both the growth of the aviation sector and Guyana's rising profile as a regional destination.

Behind the scenes, airport staff, airlines, customs officers, immigration personnel and ground handling teams worked around the clock to manage the unprecedented volume of travellers.

Their coordinated efforts ensured that



More than 56,000 passengers arrived in Guyana during the Independence period



More than 56,000 passengers arrived in Guyana during the Independence period

thousands of visitors make Guyana's largest moved quickly from homecoming one to arrival halls to Jubilee remember. celebrations, helping to

## PRESIDENT ALI JOINS EID WORSHIPPERS IN CALL FOR SACRIFICE, PATIENCE AND PEACE



President Ali joined Muslim worshippers for prayers at the Leonora Masjid

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali joined Muslim worshippers on the West Coast of Demerara as they observed Eid al-Adha, one of the most sacred celebrations in the Islamic calendar, marked by prayer, reflection, and acts of charity.

The President attended prayers at the Leonora Masjid, where he stood alongside the faithful in observance of the "Festival of Sacrifice" which commemorates Prophet Abraham's devotion to God and willingness to submit fully to divine

command.

Eid al-Adha is traditionally observed through communal prayers, the ritual sacrifice of livestock, and the distribution of meat to family members, neighbours, and those in need.

Addressing worshippers, President Ali described the occasion as a reminder of "ultimate obedience" and urged Guyanese to strengthen their faith through patience, discipline, and service to others.

"When the most is expected of us, and the circumstances

are dire, that is when we need to showcase the extent of our faith and the patience of our faith," he said.

He stressed that sacrifice should not be viewed only as a religious ritual but as a daily commitment to building stronger families, communities, and a more united nation.

The President also offered prayers for peace in Guyana and across the world, calling on citizens to reflect that peace is built through everyday actions rooted in faith and responsibility.



President Ali joined Muslim worshippers for prayers at the Leonora Masjid

## PASSPORTS RETURNED, WAGES PAID AS GOVT INTERVENES IN REGION SEVEN LABOUR DISPUTE

After weeks of uncertainty and concern, dozens of foreign workers employed at a quarry operation in Batavia, Region Seven, are beginning to see progress on issues that prompted government's intervention, according to an update from the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Planning.

The ministry said it has been actively engaging both the workers and their

employer, HRIM Resource Management, following complaints raised by 37 employees regarding passports, wages, employment conditions and repatriation arrangements.

One of the most pressing concerns involved workers' passports. Employees had reported that the documents were being withheld by the company. However, the company

maintained that the passports had been voluntarily lodged for safekeeping. Following an investigation and a review of company records, the ministry confirmed that the issue has since been resolved and all affected workers are now in possession of their passports.

The ministry also reported that all outstanding wages for April, along with salaries owed up to May

16, were paid on May 25. Documentation confirming the payments was submitted by the company.

Another issue involved claims by workers that US\$2,500 had been withheld from their earnings. After examining employment contracts presented by the workers, ministry officials found no evidence that such deductions were being improperly withheld.

The contracts reviewed contained varying provisions and were governed by foreign jurisdictions, including Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates.

Attention has also turned to the future of the workers. Five employees nearing the end of their contracts are being considered for repatriation, while 15 have expressed a desire to remain in Guyana. The ministry has already

secured employment opportunities for those workers and is facilitating the necessary work permit process.

The ministry said it continues to work with the Indian High Commission and other stakeholders on the remaining cases while ensuring occupational safety concerns at the quarry are addressed and workers' rights protected.

# THOUSANDS GATHER AT SUNRISE SERVICE AS GUYANA REFLECTS ON UNITY



The early morning service, held on the eve of the Diamond Jubilee

dignitaries, and ordinary citizens in a shared space of worship and gratitude.

Despite shifting weather conditions, the atmosphere remained calm and reverent as gospel hymns, prayers, and sermons from Christian, Muslim, and Hindu leaders filled the air and carried into the dawn. The service was designed as a symbol of national unity, highlighting the country's long-standing tradition of religious coexistence.

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, addressing the gathering, said the moment reflected the essence of the Guyanese identity.

“What we are doing here this morning is showing compassion, true honour, respect, dignity, and love for each other and each other's faith,” he said.

The President noted that while the three major religions differ in practice, they share

common teachings about personal growth, responsibility, and wisdom. He said these principles mirror the nation's own journey from colonial rule through Independence and ongoing development.

“Beyond the economic and the political and social, I believe firmly that faith is an essential character for the growth and transition of any nation,” he added, calling for faith to be embraced as a foundational pillar of national progress.

A specially composed

interfaith song, created collaboratively by Christian, Hindu, and Muslim communities, was performed during the service and received warm applause from the audience.

One of the symbolic highlights of the morning was the lighting of the Unity Candle by President Ali alongside religious leaders, an act that underscored shared destiny and mutual respect.

The event also drew several prominent figures, including Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips, Vice President Dr



The early morning service, held on the eve of the Diamond Jubilee



The early morning service, held on the eve of the Diamond Jubilee



The early morning service, held on the eve of the Diamond Jubilee

Bharrat Jagdeo, and Courtney Walsh, and Minister of Human Services and Social Security Dr Vindhya Persaud. Cricket legends Brian Lara were also present, standing together as a symbolic reflection of regional unity.

# ALL ABOARD THE JOURNEY TO FORT ISLAND

The Essequibo River became a highway of celebration as thousands of citizens travelled by ferry convoy to Fort Island for Guyana's 60th Independence flag-raising ceremony.

Free ferry services carried residents from Regions Two, Three, Four, Five, Six and Ten, with passengers first shuttled from the Leonora National Track and Field Facility to

Parika, where the vessels departed.

Government officials, foreign dignitaries, and members of the diplomatic corps travelled alongside citizens, sharing in the

historic journey to the Essequibo River site.

Onboard, the voyage doubled as celebration, with live steel pan, saxophone performances, singers and recorded music

entertaining passengers as they made their way to the island.

The journey carried thousands toward Fort Island, home to the historic Fort Zeelandia, as Guyana marked

its Diamond Jubilee Independence flag-raising ceremony for the first time at the site.



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# HISTORY MEETS NATION

**F**ort Island stood at the centre of Guyana’s Diamond Jubilee Independence celebrations as the nation marked 60 years of nationhood on the storied Essequibo River island.

President Dr. Irfaan Ali, alongside regional leaders including Barbados Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley, led the flag-raising ceremony as the Golden Arrowhead was hoisted against the backdrop of Fort Zeelandia.

The ceremony brought together cultural performances, visiting dignitaries and thousands of citizens who had journeyed by river to witness the historic occasion.

This photo spread captures moments of national pride, cultural expression and unity, set within one of Guyana’s most significant heritage sites, once a key Dutch colonial administrative centre.

The celebration reflected a powerful connection between past and present, as Fort Island moved from historic landmark to national stage in Guyana’s Diamond Jubilee observance



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## NEW INDIAN-THEMED SPICE ROUTE RESTAURANT ADDS FRESH FLAVOURS TO GEORGETOWN'S DINING SCENE



The official opening of Spice Route Restaurant and Bar

Georgetown's dining scene received a new addition with the official opening of Spice Route Restaurant and Bar, an Indian-themed establishment located on Crown Street, Queenstown. The government has described the investment as another sign of growing confidence in Guyana's expanding tourism and hospitality sector.

Speaking at the grand opening ceremony, Minister of Tourism,

Industry and Commerce Susan Rodrigues said the new venture reflects increasing investor interest in the country's economic future. She noted that Guyana's rapid development continues to attract both local and international entrepreneurs.

**"More and more people are coming to Guyana and investing in Guyana. This is the confidence that is being exhibited when people launch new business ventures**

here in Guyana," Minister Rodrigues said.

The minister emphasised the role of restaurants in shaping the visitor experience, explaining that dining establishments contribute far beyond food service. She said they create spaces for connection, cultural exchange and lasting memories. Minister Rodrigues also pointed to Guyana's growing

cultural diversity and evolving food scene, noting that both locals and visitors are increasingly open to exploring international and authentic Guyanese cuisine.

Spice Route proprietor Manoj Venkatesan said the restaurant aims to introduce diners to a wide range of Indian cuisine drawn from different regions across

India. The menu features between 150 and 200 dishes, including North and South Indian specialties prepared by a dedicated kitchen team.

**"We are offering exclusive Indian cuisine from different parts of India. We wanted to bring something new and different for Guyanese to experience,"** Venkatesan said.

He added that the restaurant's interior design reflects a vintage Indian theme, with décor and furnishings imported over a six-month period to create an immersive cultural setting. Among its signature offerings is venison vindaloo, a fusion dish combining traditional Indian

flavours with locally sourced ingredients.

Venkatesan, who has lived in Guyana for seven years and works in the hospitality sector, said the country's economic growth and tourism expansion influenced his decision to invest. He expressed confidence that Spice Route will be well received by local diners and visitors alike.



The official opening of Spice Route Restaurant and Bar



The official opening of Spice Route Restaurant and Bar

## FORT ISLAND SET FOR TOURISM TRANSFORMATION AFTER JUBILEE SPOTLIGHT

Fresh from hosting Guyana's Diamond Jubilee Independence celebrations, Fort Island is poised for a new chapter as the government moves to develop the historic site into a major tourism destination.

The Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport announced plans to enhance access to the island, improve visitor experiences, encourage private investment and preserve its rich cultural heritage.

The recent Independence



The historic site is to be developed into a major tourism destination

celebrations, held on Fort Island for the first time, attracted thousands of visitors and highlighted the destination's untapped tourism potential.

Interest is already growing. Private investors have expressed a willingness to develop eco-lodges on the island, while residents stand to benefit from increased demand for meals, supplies and other visitor services.

Tour operators are also expected to play a

key role in expanding Fort Island's presence on Guyana's tourism circuit. Officials say the goal is to create sustainable

economic opportunities while safeguarding one of the country's most significant heritage sites.



The historic site is to be developed into a major tourism destination

## GUYANA'S JUBILEE BRANDING HEADED TO 400 NYC SUBWAY STATIONS

Residents of Orealla-Siparuta in Region Six are set to see new economic and tourism opportunities emerge as construction advances on a community restaurant and a modern stall facility, both expected to be completed within the coming months.

The projects, which are already well underway, are being described by village leaders as important steps in improving services, creating jobs and strengthening local enterprise in the riverine community.

Toshao Laurence Vandenburg said the

restaurant project is now about 65 per cent complete and should be finished within the next two months. Funded through the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), the facility is intended to provide a proper dining space for both residents and visitors, filling a long-standing gap in the community.

**"One of the complaints we've had from not only residents, but from people coming into the community, is that they don't have any proper facility to go and have lunch,"**



Work progressing on the first restaurant in Orealla-Siparuta

the Toshao explained. Once completed, the restaurant is expected to support tourism activity, create employment opportunities and generate additional income for the village. Vandenburg said

the project reflects wider efforts to ensure hinterland communities benefit more directly from national development programmes.

**"It shows that the government is**

**trying to pave the way for Amerindian communities to have the same services and the same benefits that coastlanders have,"** he said.

Alongside the restaurant, work is also progressing on a modern stall facility designed to improve conditions for local vendors and small business operators. The structure is approximately 85 per cent complete and is expected to become operational within a month.

Unlike many externally funded projects, this facility is

being developed using the community's own revenue, generated through sun levies, including royalties from lumbering activities and the sale of white sand. Village leaders say this reflects a growing model of self-sustained development combined with government support.

The village council is also inviting new applicants to occupy the stalls once the facility opens, with the aim of expanding local commerce.

Management will be overseen by the village's health and sanitation and treasury departments to ensure proper upkeep and accountability.



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## GUYANA RETURNS TO OAS WOMEN'S COMMISSION EXECUTIVE BODY AFTER 24 YEARS



Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud (second from right), with other members of the CIM of the Organisation of American States (OAS)

Guyana has regained a seat on the executive body of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) for the first time in 24 years, marking a significant milestone in the country's growing role in regional leadership on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The achievement came during the 40th Assembly of Delegates of the Organisation of American States (OAS) in Washington, D.C., where ministers and gender leaders from across the Americas gathered to

discuss policies aimed at advancing women's economic participation, leadership and inclusion.

Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud, represented Guyana at the assembly and was elected to serve on the Commission's executive body for the 2026-2029 term.

Her election places Guyana at the centre of regional discussions and decision-making on issues affecting women throughout the hemisphere.

The CIM serves

as the OAS' principal organisation for promoting women's rights and gender equality across the Americas. As a member of its executive body, Dr Persaud will help shape policies and programmes addressing key issues such as economic empowerment, digital inclusion and expanding opportunities for women in leadership.

Guyana's return to the executive committee also contributes to a historic moment for the Caribbean. The country now joins

three other CARICOM member states on the body, creating the strongest Caribbean representation ever achieved within the Commission.

The appointment reflects Guyana's continued efforts to advance gender equality through expanded opportunities for women, stronger social protections and increased female participation in leadership roles.

## NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS BEGIN ON RAISING ONLINE SAFETY STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN



Leading the discussions, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance Gail Teixeira

initiative forms part of President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's commitment to safeguarding young people in an increasingly connected world.

Leading the discussions, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance Gail Teixeira described the exercise as the start of an important national conversation about the challenges children face online.

Among the key concerns raised were the effects of excessive social media use on mental health, cognitive development and interpersonal relationships. The consultation also examined issues such as cyberbullying, online harassment, exploitation and exposure to harmful content, as well as the addictive design features

built into many digital platforms.

Drawing on examples from countries already implementing stricter online protections, Minister Teixeira pointed to Australia's restrictions on social media access for children under 16, the United Kingdom's Online Safety Act and age-based measures adopted in several European nations.

To guide Guyana's approach, she proposed a National Child Online Safety and Ethical Technology Framework centred on five key pillars. These include setting a minimum social media age of 16, requiring platforms to conduct age verification, promoting child-safe platform design, integrating digital literacy into

school curricula and empowering parents through awareness programmes and online safety resources.

The minister also proposed establishing a dedicated Child Online Protection Authority to oversee compliance and international cooperation.

Stakeholders have been tasked with consulting their respective organisations before reconvening in three weeks to present recommendations, helping to shape policies that balance digital opportunities with the safety and well-being of Guyana's children.



Leading the discussions, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance Gail Teixeira

## PENSIONERS TO RECEIVE \$30,000 ELECTRICITY CREDIT STARTING THIS MONTH

Thousands of senior citizens across Guyana are set to receive additional financial relief this month as the government begins applying a \$30,000 electricity subsidy to the accounts of eligible pensioners.

Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr Vindhya Persaud, announced that qualifying pensioners will see the credit reflected directly on their June 2026 Guyana Power and Light (GPL)

According to the minister, the subsidy applies to pensioners who have GPL accounts registered in their names. Those without a GPL account are not eligible for the benefit.

**"So, on your June bill, you will see the credits to the value of \$30,000 featured on your GPL bill,"** Minister Persaud explained.

She encouraged eligible beneficiaries to review their bills and, if

the credit is not reflected, to visit the nearest GPL office for assistance.

The minister also reminded pensioners that the government's water subsidy programme is already in effect and urged recipients to check their water bills to ensure they are receiving the benefit.

The electricity and water subsidies form part of the government's ongoing efforts to ease living costs and provide greater support for senior citizens nationwide.

**PENSIONERS SUBSIDY OF \$30,000**  
(GUYANA DOLLARS)

**This applies to pensioners who have a GPL account.**

**YOUR JUNE 2026 GPL BILL WILL AUTOMATICALLY INCLUDE THE \$30,000 PENSIONER SUBSIDY.**  
No additional application needed for current GPL account holders.

## PUBLIC DAY DELIVERS RESULTS AS REGION SIX RESIDENTS RAISE LONGSTANDING CONCERNS

For years, many residents of Region Six carried folders filled with documents, applications and unanswered requests, hoping for progress on issues that affected their daily lives. Dozens walked into a public day outreach with concerns, and left with renewed hope that solutions were finally within reach.

Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo brought the government's public day initiative to East Berbice-Corentyne, the third such exercise following similar outreaches in Regions Two and Four. The event attracted large numbers of residents seeking assistance with matters ranging from land titles and leases to pensions and gratuities.



Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo brought the government's public day initiative to East Berbice-Corentyne

For Black Bush Polder resident Savitree Persaud, the outreach brought a breakthrough in a matter she had been pursuing on behalf of her family. She attended seeking information about her father's lease and was able to speak directly with the relevant

commissioner, who committed to signing off on the document within the week.

"This is a great opportunity for all residents in Region Six. It saves you the hassle of going up to Georgetown," Persaud said. "This outreach

needs to happen more often because it is a great service to the people."

Ravindranauth Kisson described the exercise as equally important. After waiting 10 years to have issues surrounding his gratuity and government pension resolved, he met directly with the vice president and was referred to the appropriate official.

"To get this kind of access is important," Kisson said.

For Seeram Ramdas, who has been pursuing his land title since 2020, the day also delivered welcome news. After years of navigating

paperwork and surveys, he was informed that his matter would be addressed without another costly trip to Georgetown.

"I was trying for a long time and now it is here," Ramdas said.

The outreach

programme allows residents to engage directly with government officials and agencies, bringing decision-makers closer to communities and helping citizens find faster resolutions to longstanding concerns.



Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo brought the government's public day initiative to East Berbice-Corentyne

## 22 REGION SIX COUNCILS RECEIVE NEW TRUCKS



The vehicles were officially handed over during a public day outreach led by Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

Residents across Region Six can expect cleaner neighbourhoods and more reliable waste collection services following the handover of garbage compact trucks to 22 Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs.)

The vehicles were

officially handed over at Albion during a public day outreach led by Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, who was joined by Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh.

For the

communities, the new trucks represent a step toward improved public health, cleaner surroundings and stronger local services.

Addressing local leaders, the vice president stressed that the trucks must be used solely for the benefit of residents.

"I expect that these that are being handed over would not be used to do private work or be parked in any compound, but that they would be deployed consistently in the service of the people of the community," he said.

The government has also increased subsidies to local authorities, providing councils with additional resources to maintain the vehicles and ensure regular waste collection services.

Recognising the challenges some councils face in disposing of waste, Dr Jagdeo said the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development will work closely with local bodies to identify suitable disposal sites closer to their communities.

The truck distribution forms part of a wider government effort to strengthen local infrastructure and

improve the quality of life in communities across Guyana. Significant investments are also being made in drainage systems, roads and street lighting.

"We intend as a party to fulfil every promise we made in

the elections," the vice president told residents.

Region Six now joins Regions One, Two, Three, Four and Five, along with Mahdia, Lethem and communities in Region 10, in benefitting from the nationwide initiative aimed at delivering cleaner, healthier and more sustainable communities.



The vehicles were officially handed over during a public day outreach led by Vice President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo

## NEW REGION FOUR REO PLEDGES PEOPLE-CENTRED, TRANSPARENT ADMINISTRATION

Newly appointed Regional Executive Officer (REO) for Region Four, Juan Edghill Jr, has pledged a renewed focus on accountability, responsiveness and people-centred governance as he begins his tenure in office.

Appearing on the *Starting Point* podcast, Edghill described public service as one of the most "dynamic and humbling" responsibilities, stressing that leadership should be rooted in service rather than status.

"I don't see leadership as something you do to get a position, but it

is to serve," he said, noting that his role presents an opportunity to deliver what he called "higher service" to the people of Region Four.

He outlined three core pillars that will guide his administration: a people-centred approach, improved service delivery and a strong development focus. According to him, every programme, policy and project must directly improve the welfare and wellbeing of citizens.

Edghill also emphasised the importance of accountability and efficiency across the region's operations,

particularly in public spending and procurement processes.

Drawing on his background in financial regulation, he said strict compliance with national laws will be central to his leadership, including adherence to the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act, the Procurement Act, the Audit Act and the Local Democratic Organs Act.

He added that the administration will act on recommendations from the Auditor General and work to correct any recurring deficiencies identified in audits.

The REO further committed to improving

responsiveness within the Regional Democratic Council, saying residents should not face difficulties when attempting to access services or lodge complaints.

"I don't want complaints about people calling the RDC and not getting through," he said, while promising greater visibility through community outreach, walkabouts and planned public engagement days.

On development, Edghill revealed that more than 100 projects are currently ongoing across the East Coast, East Bank and highway

corridors. He said technical teams have already begun reviewing progress to ensure faster implementation.

He also credited President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali and the government for creating opportunities for young professionals to take on leadership roles in Guyana's ongoing transformation.



Newly appointed Regional Executive Officer (REO) for Region Four, Juan Edghill Jr

# SWIFT NATIONAL RESPONSE SEES FLOODED COMMUNITIES BEGIN TO RECOVER AFTER HEAVY RAINS



Government launches multi-agency response after intense rainfall floods several regions

Heavy and persistent rainfall that swept across Guyana on May 29, 2026, led to flooding in several communities, but a swift, coordinated national response has seen affected areas beginning to return to normal conditions. The Government

drainage interventions. Across both the coastland and hinterland, the more than 24 hours of intense rainfall placed significant pressure on drainage systems, resulting in overtopped canals and temporary water accumulation in low-lying areas.

President Ali, who led assessments in Region Three, said a full multi-agency response was quickly mobilised to manage the situation in real time.

Drainage teams were deployed to operate pumps, clear blocked channels and monitor flood-prone

communities, while additional mobile pumping units were positioned in critical areas to speed up water removal.

By the following day, water levels in most affected communities had begun to recede significantly, with drainage systems and sustained pumping operations restoring normal conditions in many areas.

Government officials say the rapid response helped prevent more severe disruption, as teams continue to monitor vulnerable locations in the event of further rainfall.



Government launches multi-agency response after intense rainfall floods several regions



Government launches multi-agency response after intense rainfall floods several regions

## DRAINAGE WORKS AND RELIEF MEASURES ROLLED OUT FOR FLOOD-AFFECTED MAHAICONY COMMUNITIES



President Ali meeting with the farmers

Intense rainfall over the past several weeks has left hundreds of acres of farmland and several households along Mahaicony Creek in Region Five (Mahaica-Berbice) severely affected, with farmers struggling to recover from rising floodwaters.

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali visited the impacted

the President told those gathered.

He acknowledged that while water levels this time are higher than those experienced during the 2021 floods, the situation is less severe overall, attributing the improvement to drainage and irrigation investments made in recent years.

**“We are in a better position now because of the investment we have made already,”** President Ali said, adding that the completion of the Hope-like Canal would further strengthen drainage in the area.

During the visit, the President also

instructed regional officials to maintain closer contact with affected communities. He directed the Regional Chairman, Vice Chair, and Regional Executive Officer to visit Mahaicony Creek monthly, stressing that engagement should not be limited to office settings.

On the ground, emergency interventions are already underway. NDIA’s Chairman Lionel Wordsworth said five excavators have been deployed to assist farmers with raising dams, clearing runways, and installing culverts. In addition, farmers have been working

alongside officials using tractors to help drain floodwater.

A pump has been relocated to the Mahaicony Creek river mouth, while another has been deployed directly to the affected area. Further works include strengthening embankments along the

Jagdeo Canal, which spans approximately 15,000 acres.

The President also committed to additional measures, including rehabilitation of kokers, increased pump capacity, and clearing of major drainage canals, as recovery efforts continue.



Hundreds of acres of farmland under water in Mahaicony

## ‘NOBODY IS MOVING YOU’ - PRESIDENT ALI REASSURES GOED FORTUIN FISHERFOLK AS WATERFRONT UPGRADE MOVES AHEAD

The waterfront at Goed Fortuin is the heartbeat of a thriving fishing community, with vendors, boat operators and fishermen depending on the river for their livelihoods. Recently, amid concerns over flooding and uncertainty about future development plans, residents received a clear message from President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali: their place in the community is secure.

**“Nobody is going to move you from here. Don’t let anybody mislead you,”** the president told fisherfolk during a

visit to the West Bank Demerara community.

The engagement formed part of a wider assessment of flood-affected areas and drainage infrastructure. But alongside inspecting drainage structures and monitoring flood conditions, President Ali used the opportunity to reassure residents that the government’s planned transformation of the Goed Fortuin waterfront will be carried out with their interests at its centre.

The project, previously announced by the government, aims to modernise the

fishing hub through the construction of a cold storage facility, upgraded vending areas, a timber wharf, improved lighting and enhanced security infrastructure. Revetment works and dredging are also planned to strengthen river defences and improve drainage.

According to the president, major construction could begin within the next six to eight weeks, with works being executed in phases to ensure fishermen and vendors can continue earning throughout the process.

**“We have to work**

**together. We will do section by section so people can continue earning while the work continues,”** he explained.

The visit also provided residents with an opportunity to raise concerns about flooding affecting farms, drainage channels and low-lying areas. President Ali acknowledged that the volume of rainfall has placed extraordinary pressure on drainage systems across several regions but noted that government agencies remain on the ground monitoring conditions and deploying resources

where needed.

Several residents pointed to rehabilitated drainage channels as evidence that previous

investments have helped communities withstand the recent weather event.



President Ali during the visit to Goed Fortuin

## LEGUAN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS SAY SCHOLARSHIPS ARE CHANGING GENERATIONAL OUTCOMES



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali meeting with educators and residents

Residents of Leguan Island in Region Three are hailing the government's education initiatives and expanded online learning platforms for transforming access to higher education, allowing more people to study without leaving their remote community. During a recent walkabout on the island, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali met with educators and residents who shared how scholarships and digital programmes have reshaped their academic and professional journeys. Many credited the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) and the Cyril Potter

College of Education (CPCE), alongside online offerings from the University of Guyana (UG), for making tertiary education more accessible and affordable.

Residents said the ability to study remotely has been particularly impactful for teachers, who previously faced financial and logistical barriers to pursuing higher qualifications. With the expansion of online learning, many are now able to complete degrees while continuing to live and work in their communities.

One veteran mathematics teacher,

who has served the island for 27 years and now holds a deputy head teacher post, said education has become a family success story. He noted that his children have followed in his footsteps, becoming trained educators themselves. **"Both are trained teachers,"** he said proudly, referring to his daughters now working in the profession.

Another educator described an academic journey that progressed from teacher training at CPCE to a bachelor's degree and now a master's qualification, all achieved through

a combination of in-person and online study. The teacher described the experience as life-changing and empowering.

Agriculture educator Mario Seeram said the introduction of free tertiary education allowed him to pursue university studies while remaining on Leguan. He explained that online classes reduced the need for travel, with only occasional trips required for practical sessions and examinations.

Other residents echoed similar sentiments, highlighting the financial relief of avoiding relocation

costs such as housing and transportation. One teacher noted completing multiple qualifications through CPCE, the University of Guyana, and regional online programmes while remaining on the island.

Education officer Vrindra Damali said 30 teachers on Leguan are currently pursuing higher education through UG or GOAL-supported programmes.

Residents said the expansion of scholarships and digital education has not only improved qualifications but also strengthened community life by allowing professionals to grow academically while staying rooted in their home island.

## EDUCATION CLOSER TO HOME FOR KARRAU STUDENTS

For years, families in the riverine community of Karrau, Lower Mazaruni, dreamed of having a secondary school closer to home. Today, that dream is quickly becoming reality.

Construction of the new secondary school is now 85 per cent complete, bringing excitement and relief to residents who see the project as a major step forward for the village's future.

Toshao Shane

Cornelius said the school has long been part of Karrau's development vision as the community continues to grow.

**"The secondary school is a very important project for the village because it is something the village has always wanted. It is within our 10-year village plan, so to see it becoming a reality is very important**

for us as a growing community," he said.

The school is expected to significantly reduce the burden on students who often have to travel far from home to continue their education. Residents also believe it will help shield children from social and environmental challenges associated with long-distance travel.

The facility, which

includes teachers' quarters for five educators, is being built at an estimated cost of nearly \$400 million and will feature electrical and solar-powered systems.

When completed, the school is expected to serve approximately 300 students, beginning with grades seven and eight before expanding further.



Work in progress at the Karrau Secondary School

## EXPANDED LEARNING SPACES ON THE WAY AS GOVT TARGETS WIDER SCHOOL ACCESS

The Ministry of Education has opened the door for new school construction projects across Guyana, inviting contractors to bid for the building and reconstruction of key educational facilities as part of a broader push to expand access to learning nationwide.

According to a public notice, bids are being sought for the reconstruction of St. Sidwell's Primary School

and J.E. Burnham Nursery School, along with the construction of a new teaching block at F.E. Pollard Primary School.

The projects are part of an ambitious national education expansion programme aimed at commissioning more than 33 new schools this year, reflecting ongoing efforts to bring educational services closer to communities and reduce

overcrowding in existing institutions.

In recent years, the government has prioritised investment in education infrastructure, particularly in rural and hinterland areas where access to schools has long posed challenges for students and families. The expansion has also focused on reducing travel distances for learners and improving attendance levels by ensuring schools are

located within or near communities.

Alongside physical infrastructure, education support programmes such as the "Because We Care" Cash Grant have been introduced to ease financial pressures on parents, while initiatives offering eight free Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) subjects continue to broaden access to secondary education.



Minister of Education Sonia Parag in a classroom

The Ministry noted that the 2026 National Budget has allocated \$24.3 billion to support continued improvements

in the sector, reinforcing the government's focus on strengthening both access and quality in education.



The Guyana Police Force conducting the Learner Drivers' Theoretical Examination in Katoka Village

## LEARNER DRIVER TESTS TAKEN TO KATOKA AS POLICE EXPAND RURAL ACCESS TO SERVICES

Residents of Katoka Village in Central Rupununi, Region Nine, no longer have to travel long distances to Lethem to sit their learner driver's theoretical examination, after the Guyana Police Force (GPF) brought the test directly to the community.

The initiative formed

part of efforts to make essential licensing services more accessible to hinterland residents. The examination, usually conducted in Lethem, was held in Katoka to accommodate both new applicants and candidates who had previously missed the opportunity due to travel

constraints.

Police said the outreach enables more residents to legally obtain driving certification, improving their ability to commute to work, run errands and access essential services.

Villagers welcomed the move, describing it as a meaningful step

that removes barriers to opportunity. Village Councillor Nimrud Parks praised the initiative, noting that it has already begun easing daily challenges and expressed hope for more services to be delivered directly to the community in the future.

## GPHC UNDERGOES MAJOR HEALTHCARE OVERHAUL



GPHC CEO Robbie Rambarran

Guyana's leading public hospital has undergone a dramatic transformation over the past five years, with approximately \$85.2 billion invested to expand services, upgrade infrastructure and strengthen medical capacity at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC).

Chief Executive Officer, Dr Robbie Rambarran, disclosed the

scale of the investment during an appearance on the programme *Starting Point*, noting that the funding has reshaped almost every aspect of the institution's operations, from staffing and training to advanced medical technology.

He explained that a large share of the investment has gone into human resources, with GPHC's monthly payroll now reaching around \$1 billion. The hospital currently employs more than 2,500 staff members, including specialists across multiple fields of medicine. However, Dr Rambarran acknowledged that staffing pressures remain in certain areas, particularly nursing, where the institution is operating at just over 60 per cent of required

capacity.

To address these gaps, the hospital has expanded its training programmes, offering 21 postgraduate courses in collaboration with the



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali and Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, inspecting the new digital X-ray machine

University of Guyana and international universities. These initiatives are aimed at building a stronger pipeline of locally trained specialists capable of meeting growing

healthcare demands.

**"So we are partnering, training our staff heavily so that they can meet the needs of our people in specialised care,**

**and also investing in a lot of state-of-the-art equipment,"** Dr Rambarran said. **"There's equipment that we have at Georgetown Hospital that is not even in the**

**Caribbean."**

Alongside staff development, major investments are also being channelled into modern medical technology. Central to this transformation is a new state-of-the-art medical imaging centre currently under construction at the hospital, valued at more than \$1 billion.

Once completed, the facility will house Guyana's first public-sector magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine, marking a significant step forward in diagnostic healthcare. The centre will also include two CT scanners, including a recently acquired unit, two catheterisation laboratories, mammography machines and an extracorporeal

shockwave lithotripsy (ESWL) machine used for non-invasive treatment of kidney stones.

Dr Rambarran said the ESWL technology will reduce the need for surgical procedures and improve recovery times for patients.

**"These are some of the exciting things that are happening at the hospital that will transform our diagnostic capabilities,"** he said, adding that faster and more accurate diagnosis will directly improve treatment outcomes.

The upgrades form part of a broader push to modernise Guyana's public health system and ensure that patients have access to more advanced and efficient care at the country's main referral hospital.

## REGION SEVEN RECEIVES NEW WATER AMBULANCE



The vessel was officially handed over by Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony

For many residents living along the rivers of the Lower Mazaruni, access to urgent medical care can depend on how quickly help can travel across the water. That journey is expected to become faster and safer with the arrival of a new \$24.8 million water ambulance for Region Seven.

The vessel was officially handed over by Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony to the regional administration of Cuyuni-Mazaruni as part of the government's ongoing efforts to improve healthcare access in hinterland and riverine communities.

Designed to serve residents of the Lower

Mazaruni, the state-of-the-art ambulance will provide emergency transportation for patients requiring urgent medical attention and transfer to healthcare facilities.

Dr Anthony said the investment reflects the government's recognition that river transportation remains essential for delivering healthcare services to many interior communities.

**"We recognised that in Region Seven we needed to have several river ambulances, and on the request of the regional administration, we**

**were able to procure this vessel to serve the Mazaruni area,"** he explained.

The ambulance is equipped to carry two patients and includes space for oxygen support, medical supplies and healthcare personnel, allowing emergency care to begin even before patients reach a health facility.

According to the health minister, the new vessel complements other transportation resources already provided to the region, including all-terrain vehicles used to reach remote communities.

**"When you combine this**

**transportation asset with the ATVs and other resources we have provided, we are seeing that Region Seven, from a health perspective, is becoming more connected,"** he said.

The investment also supports broader healthcare

improvements underway in the region, including expanded telemedicine services that allow community health workers and medics in remote locations to consult with doctors in real time, ensuring patients receive faster and more effective care.



The vessel was officially handed over by Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony



First Phase of the Adventure public Access road project

Residents of Adventure and nearby communities along the Linden-Soesdyke Highway are set to benefit from a major concrete road project now nearing completion, aimed at improving long-standing transportation

challenges, especially during the rainy season.

Chairman of Adventure, Alonzo Cornelius, said the road was a key priority for the community due to years of difficult travel conditions caused by sections of white sand and loam that made access challenging in both wet and dry weather.

He explained that farmers and coal producers were often forced to manually

transport their goods to the highway before arranging onward travel, increasing both time and effort.

**"So having this road, this is really, really a great benefit for them because it will actually allow vehicles to now reach directly to their homes and farms,"** Cornelius said.

The project directly benefits around 25 households, along with a church and several

farming areas, while also improving access for school children. The road spans roughly three-quarters of a mile and includes drainage works and a culvert system to manage runoff from nearby hills.

According to Cornelius, the project is about 75 per cent complete, with contractors working to finalise the remaining section linking the community to the main highway. It is expected

to be completed within about three weeks.

Implemented by the Ministry of Public Works through a public bidding process, the project forms part of wider development efforts in the area. Cornelius said it reflects ongoing improvements during his tenure as chairman, including upgrades to recreational facilities, water access and transport support initiatives.

## BETTER ACCESS AHEAD AS ADVENTURE ROAD PROJECT REACHES FINAL STAGE

## CUT ROSE PROJECT NOW HELPING WOMEN BUILD FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE



Locally grown roses from the 'Cut Rose' Project at NAREI

Inside specially designed shade houses, roses are doing more than beautifying the landscape, they are helping women and single parents earn an income and build financial independence.

The government's Cut Rose Project, conceptualised by President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali and implemented through the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI), continues to expand as demand for locally grown roses increases.

Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha said many participants are now seeing strong returns from the initiative. According to the minister, persons purchased rose plants for about \$500 and are able to resell the roses for as much as \$2,000.

“When the Cut Rose Project was first introduced, many persons believed it would not succeed,”

Minister Mustapha said, while noting that a growing number of single parents are now benefitting from the programme. The project forms part of the government's wider push to diversify agriculture while ensuring women and young people benefit from new economic opportunities.

NAREI has already engaged a specialist to increase production, with additional technical support expected to help expand the initiative in the coming months. The project has steadily grown since its launch, generating millions in revenue and reducing Guyana's reliance on imported roses. In 2023 alone, the initiative earned more than \$5 million from the production of nearly 23,000 roses.

Participants were introduced to greenhouse management techniques alongside digital sensor technologies that monitor temperature, humidity, soil moisture, light intensity, and nutrient levels in real time. Trainers said the systems allow farmers to move from traditional observation to data-driven decision-making, improving both productivity and crop quality while reducing environmental risk.



Participants were introduced to greenhouse management techniques alongside digital sensor technologies

More than 90 farmers, extension officers, and academics from Regions Two, Five, and Six have been trained in climate-smart agriculture, gaining hands-on experience in integrated crop production and digital sensor systems used in protected cultivation.

The training series, led by the Food and

## FARMERS GAIN HANDS-ON GREENHOUSE TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute, is aimed at strengthening technical capacity for greenhouse and shade house farming across Guyana. Sessions began at the Mangrove Centre in Mon Repos on May 19 before continuing in Regions Two, Five, and Six through practical

field demonstrations. Participants were introduced to greenhouse management techniques alongside digital sensor technologies that monitor temperature, humidity, soil moisture, light intensity, and nutrient levels in real time. Trainers said the systems allow farmers to move from traditional observation to data-driven decision-making, improving both

productivity and crop quality while reducing environmental risk. Farmers and community food extension officers described the sessions as practical and timely. Sensors procured under the project have already been installed in pilot greenhouses across the three regions, supporting ongoing learning and field application as Guyana expands its climate-smart agriculture agenda. Mahaica Women's Group member Debbie Argyle said she plans to share

## EAST COAST ROAD UPGRADE NEARS COMPLETION



Ongoing construction on the East Coast Demerara road expansion project

The US\$192 million expansion of the East Coast Demerara Road corridor is steadily moving toward completion, with the project on track to meet its revised October 31 deadline.

Once completed, the upgraded roadway is expected to significantly ease traffic congestion along one of Guyana's busiest transport

corridors, cutting travel times and improving road safety for thousands of daily commuters.

According to the Ministry of Public Works, 20.70 kilometres of asphalt paving have already been completed out of a targeted 38.50 kilometres. Motorists are already benefitting from finished stretches between Sheriff Street and the Ogle

Roundabout, as well as from Belfield to Orange Nassau, where final surfaces are in place.

Major paving works are currently focused on the Vryheid's Lust to Orange Nassau corridor.

Significant progress has also been made on supporting infrastructure, with 30 of 33 bridges completed and 71 of 75 culverts installed.

The contractor, China Railway First Group Co. Limited, has adopted a segmented construction approach to speed up delivery across multiple sections.

The ministry has thanked the public for its patience as the transformative project enters its final stage.

## WHEEL CLAMPS, FINES AND TOWING PLANNED IN NEW ROAD SAFETY PUSH

The government is stepping up efforts to improve road safety across Guyana, with a stronger enforcement push targeting improperly parked trucks, overloaded vehicles and roadside obstructions that pose risks to motorists and pedestrians.

Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill told the Department of Public Information (DPI) that the next phase of

enforcement will include the introduction of wheel clamps for trucks found in violation of road regulations.

“We have gone out to tender for the clamps,” he said, stressing that safety remains the government's top priority for all road users.

According to the minister, the clamps will be used to immobilise offending trucks, which will only be released at the owners' expense.

He acknowledged delays in the arrival of the equipment but said enforcement will intensify once they are in place.

The ministry has already stepped-up axle load monitoring along key corridors, including the East Bank Demerara and Linden-Soesdyke Highway, where heavy-duty trucks are frequently in operation.

However, Edghill noted ongoing challenges with trucks transporting stone and other materials from

wharves in Georgetown and Kingston without proper axle load checks, contributing to damage to roads and bridges.

Limited space in the capital has also made roadside enforcement difficult, he added.

Beyond enforcement, the ministry is also addressing other hazards, including the removal of derelict vehicles and billboards that obstruct visibility and interfere with traffic flow.

While urging compliance, the minister



Removal of derelict vehicles

said the government is also working on long-term solutions, including the construction of commercial parks to provide designated areas for truck parking and operations.

# CRICKET TALENT HUNT ROLLS OUT NATIONWIDE WITH COMMUNITY CAGE PITCHES



President Ali is flanked by Director of the ExxonMobil Guyana Global Super League, Jamie Stewart (L) and Chief Executive Officer of E-Networks, Vishok Persaud and Rakesh Puri

A new nationwide pathway to professional cricket is set to turn everyday street cricket into a structured programme is set to launch the “Cricket in the Streets” initiative aimed at identifying and developing young talent across Guyana. The programme, a partnership among the government, E-Networks and the ExxonMobil Guyana Global Super League (GSL), will use newly established community cage pitches to bring coaching, mentorship and talent scouting directly into neighbourhoods, particularly in underserved areas.

Speaking via social media, President Ali said the initiative is designed to reach young people who may otherwise lack access to formal training structures.

“One of the important parts of this initiative is going into unreached areas... so that these international talents can help us spot local talent and put them into an academy to develop,” he said. The initiative will also feed into a planned national Cricket Academy along the East Coast of Demerara, where selected players will receive structured training and exposure to regional and international opportunities.

E-Networks CEO Vishok Persaud said the company is proud to support youth development, noting that sport remains a powerful tool for national growth. He added that cricket bats will be distributed in communities to encourage participation.

ExxonMobil Guyana Global Super League Director Jamie Stewart said the programme aligns with efforts to use cricket as a transformative force while strengthening opportunities for young athletes. The initiative is expected to bring international and regional cricket figures into communities, inspiring the next generation of players from the streets to the stadium.

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## NEW CO-INVEST SCHEME TARGETS WOMEN IN COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES



Women across Guyana are being encouraged to step into entrepreneurship and expand community care services through the government’s National Care Economy Initiative, which aims to improve childcare and elderly care while creating new income opportunities.

Registration is now open for the Care Economy Co-Invest Programme, an initiative led by the Ministry of Human Services

and Social Security that will support the establishment of childcare and eldercare facilities across 10 regions.

The programme is designed under a co-investment model, where individuals or small groups will receive financial support, training and mentorship to set up home-based or community care centres. These facilities are expected to increase access to

affordable, quality care while generating jobs and strengthening community support systems.

Participants will benefit from specialised training in childcare and elderly care, along with business development guidance and technical assistance to ensure centres are safe and sustainable.

The initiative is open to individuals or groups of three to eight people with access to suitable

space and a willingness to undergo mandatory training.

The ministry has urged interested applicants to register early as part of a broader effort to expand participation nationwide.

Applications can be submitted via QR code registration or by emailing the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security at [mohssscareconomy@gmail.com](mailto:mohssscareconomy@gmail.com).

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TRAINED IN BLOCK-MAKING IN LINDEN

At the Linden Multi-Complex Hall in Wismar, the sound of cement being mixed and moulds being filled signalled more than just construction training. For 20 persons living with disabilities in Region Ten, it marked the start of new possibilities.

Over five days, participants took part

in a block-making programme organised by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security through its Support Services for Persons with Disabilities Unit. The initiative combined classroom instruction with practical, hands-on training, allowing participants to learn how to mix materials, mould,

move and properly store concrete blocks.

For many, it was their first opportunity to gain direct experience in a trade that could lead to employment or small business opportunities.

Training Officer Nicklett Powers-Douglas said the programme forms part of the ministry’s wider effort to equip persons with

disabilities with practical income-generating skills while promoting independence and self-confidence.

Despite varying physical challenges, every participant successfully produced at least two six-inch concrete blocks during the training sessions. Ministry officials noted that the group remained

enthusiastic and fully engaged throughout the programme.

Relatives who attended portions of the training praised the initiative, describing it as a meaningful step towards greater inclusion and empowerment for persons with disabilities.

At the end of the programme, participants received certificates of participation, with officials indicating that more advanced levels of training are expected as the initiative expands.



Participants gaining direct experience in the trade

## MODERN VENDING TARMAC OPENS FOR DISPLACED BUXTON BUSINESSES

Dozens of vendors in Buxton are getting a fresh start after being relocated to a newly constructed vending tarmac built to accommodate businesses displaced by the ongoing \$192 million East Coast Demerara Road expansion project.

The new asphalt facility, which can house up to 61 vendors, was officially handed over during an exercise

overseen by Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill. Vendors were assigned their spots through a transparent lottery system designed to ensure fairness and equal opportunity.

Addressing the vendors, Minister Edghill stressed the importance of maintaining the facility and preserving its modern appearance. He encouraged occupants to

work collectively to keep the area clean, organised and visually appealing, noting that a uniform layout will attract more customers and create a better shopping experience.

The minister also assured vendors that additional amenities, including lighting and washroom facilities, will be installed and fully operational within two

weeks.

Looking ahead, the government plans to establish similar vending plazas in every Neighbourhood Democratic Council across the country, featuring food courts and modern amenities aimed at creating safe, clean and tourist-friendly spaces for small businesses to thrive.



New Buxton Tarmac

## TOURISM, FARMING AND SMALL BUSINESSES GROW IN AMERINDIAN COMMUNITIES UNDER LCDS



Minister of Amerindian Affairs Sarah Browne-Shadeek addressing residents of Region One during a recent outreach

Amerindian communities across Guyana are seeing expanded livelihood opportunities as investments under the Low Carbon

Development Strategy (LCDS) continue to support locally driven development projects aimed at boosting incomes and strengthening village economies.

Minister of Amerindian Affairs Sarah Browne-Shadeek told the Department of Public Information that many villages have either completed or are actively implementing projects funded through their 2025 LCDS allocations. She said the approach is rooted in community decision-making, with priorities identified during village general meetings.

According to the minister, this “bottom-up” model allows residents to determine their own development path based on local needs, resulting in a diverse range of projects across the hinterland.

Several communities have channelled funding into tourism ventures that are already generating income and employment. Among them is the Mabaruma Settlement Guest House, which continues to attract visitors and provide jobs for local residents. The Mainstay tourism initiative has also been highlighted, with riverside cabins

now supporting steady business activity and community employment.

Beyond tourism, villages are investing in agriculture, small business development, housing upgrades and livelihood programmes. Some communities have expanded poultry farming and crop production, while others have used funds to establish shops, purchase household appliances, or prepare land for farming activities.

The minister said these investments reflect both immediate needs and long-term development goals, although the ministry

continues to encourage projects that generate sustainable income over time.

She noted that LCDS funding has significantly increased the scale of development in Amerindian villages compared to previous years, when communities relied mainly on the Amerindian Development Fund (ADF) and Presidential Grants.

The ADF also continues to support youth initiatives, women’s groups, training programmes and sports development, along with infrastructure upgrades in several

regions, including Upper Mazaruni.

She added that accountability measures remain in place, requiring villages to submit financial records and receipts before accessing additional funding. Audits are conducted where concerns arise, and in cases of confirmed mismanagement, action is taken under the Amerindian Act, including investigations and possible removal of village leaders.

She said the overall framework is designed to ensure transparency while empowering communities to directly shape their own development outcomes.



Community Service Officers (CSOs) Graduate from the Small Engine Repairs Programme at Bina Hill Institute in North Rupununi

For many hinterland communities, a broken generator or damaged water pump can disrupt daily life for days or even weeks. Now, 29 young Community Service Officers (CSOs) from Regions One, Eight, Nine

and Ten are stepping up with the skills to help keep those essential machines running.

The youths recently graduated from a small engine repairs training programme at the Bina Hill Institute in Region

Nine, an initiative aimed at equipping hinterland communities with more technical expertise and self-sufficiency.

The programme, facilitated through the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, provided hands-on training in repairing and maintaining equipment commonly used in villages, including generators, chainsaws, brush cutters, water pumps and outboard engines.

Regional

Coordinator for the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, Alister Charlie, said the initiative is part of the government’s broader push to empower young people through practical training and employment opportunities.

“The programme is a stepping stone for our young people into the working world, where they can acquire life skills, become entrepreneurs

and contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities,” Charlie said.

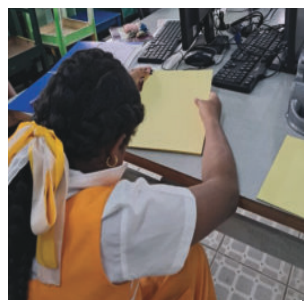
He explained that access to repair services can be difficult and costly in remote areas, making the training especially valuable for hinterland villages that rely heavily on machinery for transportation, farming and community services.

With their new skills, the graduates are expected to support

village councils by reducing downtime for critical equipment and helping communities save valuable time and resources.

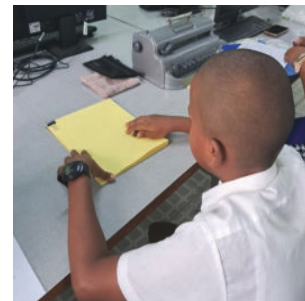
Charlie also encouraged youths across Amerindian communities to take advantage of scholarships and technical training opportunities being offered through government programmes.

## HINTERLAND YOUTHS GRADUATE AS SMALL ENGINE REPAIR TECHNICIANS



Two blind Grade Four pupils participated independently alongside their peers

Two blind Grade Four students have made history after participating in the National Reading Assessment using Braille, in a first for Guyana’s education system.



Two blind Grade Four pupils participated independently alongside their peers

The Ministry of Education has marked the milestone as a major step forward in its efforts to expand inclusive education and ensure

equal access for all learners, regardless of disability.

The students completed the assessment independently, sitting the examination alongside their peers. Officials say the development reflects a strengthening education system that is increasingly focused on accessibility and equal opportunity.

The exercise was coordinated through collaboration between the Office of the Assistant Chief Education Officer

(Special Education Needs/Disabilities), led by Dr. Keon Cheong, and the Office of the Assistant Chief Education Officer for Literacy, headed by Ms. Stembiso Grant. It was also supported by National Blind Education Monitor Ms. Rosemarie Ramitt.

To maintain independence and academic integrity, the Ministry used specialised assistive technology.

Exam

## BLIND PUPILS SIT NATIONAL EXAM WITH HELP OF BRAILLE

Examination papers were converted into Braille using a braille embosser, while the students used braille machines to complete their responses during the assessment.

Officials noted that such tools are critical in enabling learners who are blind or visually impaired to fully participate in mainstream education systems.

Looking ahead, the Ministry plans to expand Braille literacy through a national training workshop for teachers across several regions, aimed at strengthening support for visually impaired students.

A national review of data on children with visual impairments is also planned, to better guide future interventions and support strategies.

## BARABINA HILL RESIDENTS WELCOME UPGRADED CONCRETE ROADWAY

Residents of Barabina Hill in Region One are now experiencing improved travel and easier access following the completion of a 1.4-kilometre road upgrade in the community.

The previously laterite road, which often became difficult to navigate during heavy rainfall, has been fully converted into a concrete roadway, offering smoother and more reliable transportation

for residents.

The Ministry of Public Works said the upgrade is expected to enhance mobility, improve access to essential services, and support the continued development of the

village.

The project was implemented by the ministry’s Special Projects Unit using a community participation model that engaged residents and provided local employment during

construction, helping to boost community ownership and economic activity.

The upgrade forms part of wider national efforts to strengthen infrastructure and connectivity across hinterland communities.



After

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# DEVELOPMENT REACHES EVERY CORNER AS CABINET TEAMS FAN OUT ACROSS REGION SEVEN



Scene from the outreach

For two days, government officials traded boardrooms for village grounds, community centres and school compounds as one of the largest Cabinet outreaches ever undertaken in Region Seven brought decision-

On the first day, teams visited communities including Kako, Jawalla, Quebenang, Paruima, Phillipai, Imbaimadai, Kaikan and Arau, while President Ali travelled to Karrau Creek and Kamarang.



Scene from the outreach

makers directly to the people they serve.

Across the vast expanse of Cuyuni-Mazaruni, residents gathered to discuss concerns, highlight achievements and hear firsthand how government plans are expected to transform their communities in the years ahead.

From the Upper Mazaruni and Upper Cuyuni to Bartica and Batavia, the outreach was marked by a common theme: bringing services, opportunities and development closer to the people who live farthest from the coast.

Leading the engagements was President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, accompanied by ministers, members of parliament and technical officials who spread out across the region to meet residents face-to-face and address issues affecting their communities.

## New Service Centres to End Long Trips for Essential Government Services

Among the most significant announcements was the establishment of Government Service Centres in Bartica and Kamarang within four weeks. The centres will bring together key services including those offered by the Guyana Revenue Authority, National Insurance Scheme, General Register Office, Immigration and Passport Office and E-ID services, reducing the need for residents to make costly and time-consuming trips to Georgetown.

For many residents, the announcement represented a practical improvement that could save both time and money.

President Ali also used the opportunity



Scene from the outreach

to outline a broader vision for Region Seven, emphasising that the region's future extends beyond mining and includes enormous potential in tourism, agriculture and forestry.

## Major Investments Aim to Diversify Region Seven's Economy



Scene from the outreach

That vision was reflected in a series of investments announced for Kamarang, including plans for a 20,000-capacity tunnel-house poultry farm that will strengthen food security in the Upper Mazaruni while creating economic opportunities for residents. Additional initiatives include solar-powered blast freezers, expanded cold storage



Scene from the outreach

facilities and a cooking gas distribution system aimed at lowering living costs and improving access to essential goods.

In Karrau Creek, residents spoke proudly about development already taking shape within their community.

Community Service Officer Mickelly Nelson highlighted projects such as a shade house, food hub, upgraded health services, a craft centre and a new nursery school, while construction of a secondary school is nearing completion.

For resident Vanmattie Cozie, the changes are visible everywhere.

"Real development is going on in the community," she said. "We have a lot of development here and still more to come."

That optimism continued into the second day as the outreach shifted focus to Bartica,

Batavia and surrounding communities.

## Bartica Set for Lower Electricity Bills as Solar Investment Pays Off

One of the most welcomed announcements came in Bartica, where residents learned that electricity bills are expected to decrease by 25 per cent following the commissioning of

the town's 1.5-megawatt solar photovoltaic farm. The more than \$703 million project is already supplying electricity to the township while reducing dependence on imported fuel and lowering operating costs.

Residents also heard that government is moving to procure a second vessel for the Parika-Bartica route and that construction of a new bridge across the Puruni River is expected to begin in August. The approximately

## New Ferry and Puruni Bridge to Strengthen Regional Connectivity

Residents also heard that government is moving to procure a second vessel for the Parika-Bartica route and that construction of a new bridge across the Puruni River is expected to begin in August. The approximately



Scene from the outreach

US\$6 million project is expected to improve transportation links and support growing economic activity throughout the region.

In Batavia, discussions focused on housing, infrastructure and quality-of-

hospital in the Upper Mazaruni.

The project is expected to dramatically improve healthcare access by bringing advanced medical services closer to residents who currently travel long distances to



Scene from the outreach

life improvements. Residents received commitments for all-weather roads, expanded water systems, sea defence works, improved river navigation and upgrades to the community landing.

## Upper Mazaruni Hospital Moves Closer to Reality After Land Secured

Perhaps the most significant announcement for hinterland residents came with confirmation that land has now been secured for the long-awaited state-of-the-art

receive treatment. Throughout the outreach, representatives from technical agencies worked alongside ministers to address concerns on the spot, assess community needs and identify solutions.

For many residents, the engagements were not simply about announcements. They were an opportunity to directly influence decisions affecting their communities and ensure that development reflects local priorities.



Scene from the outreach



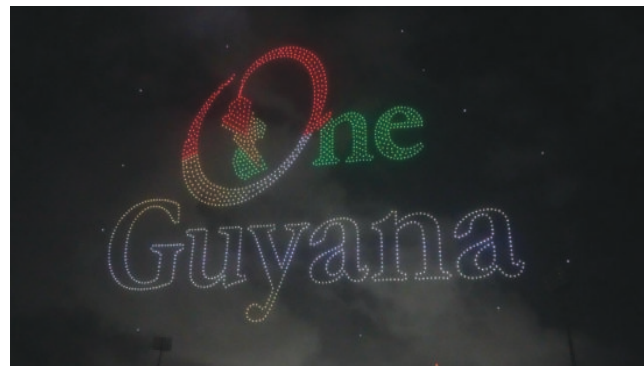
Scene from the outreach



# Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST



## A SKY FULL OF NATIONAL PRIDE



The night sky came alive during Guyana’s 60th Independence Anniversary and Diamond Jubilee celebrations as a spectacular drone light show dazzled audiences at the Guyana National Stadium at Providence.

Following performances by the Guyana and Barbados police and military bands, a canine display, and a student recreation of Guyana’s map, hundreds of illuminated drones painted iconic national symbols across the sky, from the Canje Pheasant and Victoria Regia Lily to Kaieteur Falls and the Coat of Arms. The breathtaking display was a fitting tribute to Guyana’s heritage, beauty and progress, lighting up the nation’s Diamond Jubilee in unforgettable fashion.



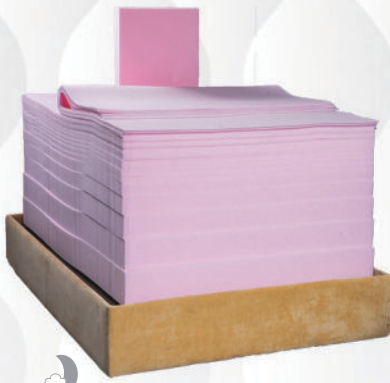
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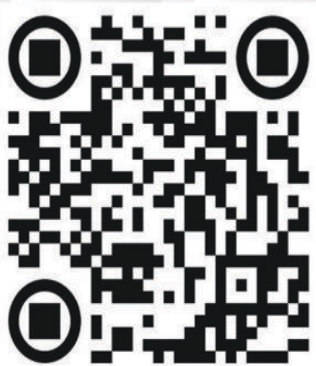
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# Gov't ramps up hinterland agriculture investment

HUNDREDS of farmers across Region Nine are already benefiting from agricultural support programmes implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture following commitments made during a ministerial outreach to the region last month, according to Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha.

The interventions, which include the distribution of poultry, beehives, agricultural inputs, planting materials and livestock support, are aimed at strengthening food production, improving livelihoods and creating economic opportunities in hinterland communities.

Among the major initiatives undertaken so far is the distribution of 2,000 Black Giant birds to 80 farmers across several villages. Farmers from Marcanata received 160 birds, Potaranau received 400, St. Ignatius received 440, Tabatinga received 800, and Hiawa received 200 birds.

Minister Mustapha said the Black Giant Programme, implemented through the Guyana Livestock Development Authority, has expanded significantly over the past five years as part of efforts to make hinterland communities more self-sufficient in poultry production.

He explained that the initiative not only strengthens food security but also creates opportunities for families to generate income and contribute to the growth of village economies.

The ministry has also continued efforts to promote apiculture in the region. Farmers and community groups from Nappi received beehives and related support to expand honey production. Members of the Nabbee group were provided with 15 beehives and 200 coffee plants to diversify their agricultural activities and increase income-generating opportunities.

In St. Ignatius, beekeeper Rolston Usher received replacement hives after 12 of his beehives were washed away during adverse weather conditions, helping him restore his operations.

Crop farmers have also benefited from targeted interventions. In Moco Moco, residents received agricultural inputs to assist with land preparation as well as rice seeds to cultivate five acres of rice.

Meanwhile, the Bina Hill Institute and the Aranaputa Women's Group received shade-house netting, plastic and other materials to support agricultural training and food production activities.

Cassava farmers in Quari and St. Ignatius were supplied with cassava planting materials to increase production, while farmers in Sawariwau received 40 bags of fertiliser to boost crop yields. Pasture seeds were also distributed to several villages to improve grazing areas and support livestock



Zulfikar Mustapha

development.

According to Minister Mustapha, the interventions reflect the government's commitment to ensuring that agricultural resources and services reach communities across the country, including those in remote hinterland regions.

"When we visit these villages and communities, and farmers raise issues and commitments are made, we have an obligation to deliver," the minister said.

He added that the government remains focused on implementing short-,

medium- and long-term solutions aimed at improving livelihoods, expanding economic opportunities and promoting sustainable development in communities nationwide.

The latest interventions come as the government continues to invest heavily in agriculture as a key pillar of national development, with particular emphasis on increasing production, improving food security and creating greater economic opportunities in hinterland and rural communities.



## GPL targets August opening of National Control Centre

THE Guyana National Control Centre (GNCC), a key component of the Gas-to-Energy Project, is expected to become fully operational by August 2026, significantly enhancing the management and reliability of Guyana's electricity network.

This was disclosed by Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation Deodat Indar following a site visit on Tuesday to inspect ongoing works at the state-of-the-art facility at Goedverwagting, East Coast Demerara.

According to the minister, the facility is currently undergoing comprehensive testing of its critical systems, including power supply, internal generators, security, water and air conditioning infrastructure.

GPL officials informed the minister that the centre's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) equipment has already arrived in Guyana and is undergoing acceptance testing at the company's secondary control centre in Sophia.

"The SCADA equipment will enable GPL to monitor, control, and optimise electricity distribution across the Demerara-Berbice Interconnected System (DBIS), thereby significantly strengthening real-time management and improving overall system reliability," Indar noted in a Facebook post.

The Guyana National Control Centre (GNCC) costs approximately US \$18.65 million (approx. GY\$3.9 billion). This total cost covers both the civil engineering of the phys-

ical building (which had an initial contract around US \$8.6 million).

The facility is being constructed by Power China International, will serve as the central hub for monitoring and managing Guyana's electricity grid. Once operational, it is expected to improve grid stability, reduce blackouts and support the integration of power from the Gas-to-Energy Project into the national system.

Government signed the contract for the establishment of the National Control Centre in 2024 as part of broader efforts to modernise Guyana's electricity infrastructure and strengthen energy security.



Minister Indar meets with stakeholders at the site



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