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Sugar: 'Take an estate and manage it'

PRESIDENT Dr. Irfaan Ali has publicly challenged the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union (GAWU) to step beyond traditional bargaining and take up the management of a sugar estate as a model operation.

Speaking at Enmore on Tuesday, the President said his government is prepared to give the union a direct role in running an estate alongside workers, as part of efforts to test new management models in the sugar industry.

"Just as we've invited proposals for the sugar estates, and we have coming in for Skeldon, we also invited the union, if you would like to take up the mantle of management and to take one of the estates and make it your model, we give you that challenge openly," Ali told the gathering.

"We invite you to be part of the management also, because that is what good, responsible government does, it invites everyone to be part of the table, to be a part of the table. Do not shy away from the opportunity. We are here to work with you," the President added. *GAWU reponse inside*



Modi to visit Canada to seal trade talks

India and Canada target completing negotiations towards the comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) before the G20 Leaders' Summit in Miami this year, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertaking a bilateral visit to seal the deal.

This was confirmed when Modi met Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney in Evian, France, on the margins of the G7 leaders' Summit on Tuesday.

Modi confirmed he may visit Canada by the end of the year. In statements prior to the start of the bilateral, he said, "You (Carney) are right in saying that we are very keen on a free trade agreement, and as you have invited me to visit Canada, I will also strive to come this year and complete this agreement before my arrival."

When the visit does occur, it will be the first standalone bilateral visit by the Indian PM to Canada since April 2015, when Stephen Harper led Canada.

The Evian bilateral is their fourth meeting between the leaders of Canada and India in the span of a year.

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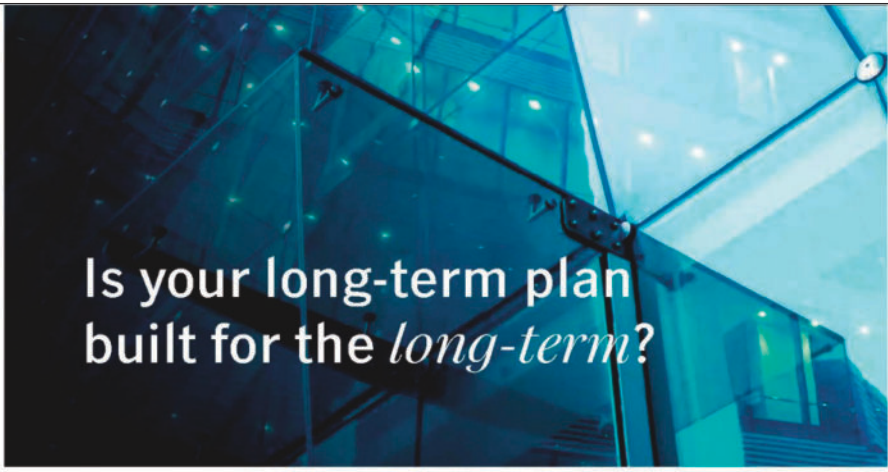
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VP Jagdeo addressing stakeholders at a contractor's meeting

Every pre-qualified small contractor will get at least one job this year: Jagdeo

VICE- President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo has assured the more than 12,000 small contractors on the government's pre-qualified list that each of them will be allocated at least one contract before the year ends, including all 530 who qualified in Region Five (Mahaica-Berbice).

He was addressing the hundreds of residents who, in their numbers, showed up for his Public Day outreach at the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) office in Fort Wellington.

The vice-president traced the assurance back to a commitment in the 2025 elections Manifesto to put small works in the hands of far more people.

"If you're on that pre-qualified list, you are in good shape," he said.

Dr. Jagdeo said the government threw the pre-qualification process open to the public after complaints that the earlier pool of contractors was too narrow. The notice ran for a month, and was then stretched to three to give as many people as possible time to register Online.

The guarantee covers contracts valued below \$15 million, which the government allocates rather than sends out to tender.



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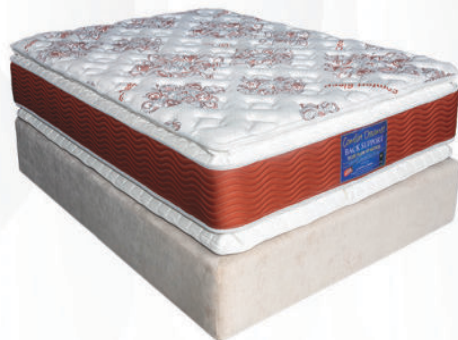
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Regional Food Hub halfway complete – Minister Mustapha

THE construction of the Regional Food Hub being built at Yarrowkabra, along the Soesdyke-Linden Highway, is roughly halfway complete. It is on course to be finished by the end of the year, Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, has said.

“As I am speaking now, approximately 50 per cent of the work has been completed. It’s ongoing,” the minister told the Department of Public Information (DPI) recently in an interview.

Local contractors hired to do the job are expected to wrap up their portion of the work by the end of September. Once that phase is done, he said, Blumberg Grain, a U.S.-based agriculture company, will move in to install a cold storage facility and the remaining systems that will bring the hub into operation. The facility marks the next stage of a project that was years in the making. Phase One began in 2023, and in July last year, the government signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Blumberg Grain and Logistics.

When complete, the hub will be built to international standards.

According to the ministry, it will feature modern grain silos, refrigerated storage, container-loading facilities and



Construction continues at the Regional Food Hub at Yarrowkabra

digital inventory systems, and is projected to reduce post-harvest losses by up to 30 per cent, supporting increased exports of rice, corn, poultry feed and processed feeds to CARICOM markets.

Minister Mustapha explained that the facility is being built with a single purpose in mind: keeping more of the value of Guyana’s produce inside the country and across the wider region.

The hub will act as a central collec-

tion and export point, drawing in produce from farmers and channelling it to Caribbean markets to help close the gap targeted under the “25 by 2025” initiative, the regional drive to cut CARICOM’s food import bill by a quarter.

“When we have this food hub up and running, it will be very active, and we’ll purchase products from farmers around the country, and that will be there to export overseas,” Minister

Mustapha added.

He also tied the facility to the wider work of the Guyana Marketing Corporation (GMC), which has been linking farmers without a market to agents who can move their produce.

The investment sits at the heart of a food-security agenda championed by President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, who has repeatedly cast Guyana as the country best placed to feed the region.

Guyana meets with World Bank AgriConnect Mission to discuss development

Agriculture Minister Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha this morning met with members of the World Bank AgriConnect Mission Team to discuss the implementation of the initiative in Guyana and opportunities to further support the development of the country’s agriculture sector.

The mission team comprised Ms. Eva Hasiner, Senior Agriculture Economist, Mr. Winston Dawes, Senior Agriculture Economist, and Mr. Andres Ramirez Salom, Associate Investment Officer.

During the engagement, Minister Mustapha reaffirmed the Ministry of Agriculture’s commitment to the successful implementation of the AgriConnect initiative, noting that Guyana is well positioned to benefit from the programme following its launch last year.

Minister Mustapha said that logistics continues to pose challenges, both in Guyana and across the wider Caribbean region. He also highlighted the government’s efforts to improve access to financing for farmers through the soon-to-be-established Guyana Development Bank as well as innovative partnerships that connect farmers who possess land and other assets with investors who have access to capital. He further emphasized the



Minister Zulfikar Mustapha (centre) with members of the World Bank AgriConnect team

importance of stakeholder participation and buy-in, noting that future consultations should be tailored to clearly demonstrate the benefits that farmers, agribusinesses, and other stakeholders can derive from the ini-

tiative.

AgriConnect is a World Bank Group initiative aimed at helping 300 million smallholder farmers transition from subsistence farming to surplus production. The programme seeks to

transform smallholder agriculture into a dynamic engine for job creation, investment, and resilience by connecting farmers more directly with finance, technology, infrastructure, and markets.



An artist's impression of the Parika International Port Facility in Region Three

Guyana starts work on \$billion international port at Parika

THE first concrete has been poured for the multi-billion-dollar Parika Modern Port Facility and Waterfront Development project, signalling the start of construction on a major initiative that is expected to transform the Essequibo gateway into a hub for regional trade, tourism and transportation.

President Dr. Irfaan Ali announced the milestone on Saturday, sharing photographs of the works.

The project forms part of a wider vision to modernise the Parika waterfront, and create an international-standard port facility capable of supporting cargo operations, cruise tourism, and luxury marine travel.

Earlier this year, Minister of Public Works Bishop Juan Edghill said the development would unlock significant economic opportunities while positioning Parika as a key centre for regional

trade and waterfront activities.

The upgraded terminal is expected to facilitate exports to Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states, creating direct access to new markets for local farmers and producers.

“It is from the Parika Terminal that we want to be able to engage the CARICOM trade of taking our produce to CARICOM nations, which means opening up markets for our farmers,” Edghill had said.

The facility will also support marine tourism through the establishment of a dedicated marina and services for visiting yachts and recreational vessels.

According to the minister, the modern port complex will house key government agencies, including Customs, Immigration, the Customs Anti-Narcotic Unit (CANU), the Guyana Police Force, and the Transport and Harbours Department.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Fisheries Department are also expected to play a role in the development, with plans for agro-processing facilities that will allow produce to be inspected, processed, packaged and shipped directly from Parika. The project will include cold storage and other supporting infrastructure.

Beyond trade and transportation, the waterfront redevelopment is intended to create a vibrant tourism and entertainment district.

“That whole Parika front is part of the development plan, which will allow us to build out the necessary night entertainment just as you would see in other parts of the world,” Edghill said.

The project will also serve as a launch point for tourists seeking to explore Guyana’s rivers and interior destinations, with plans for restaurants, improved sanitary facilities and expanded mooring space for vessels.

As part of the broader develop-

ment strategy is the Schoonord-to-Parika Highway, which has improved connectivity, eased traffic congestion and opened additional lands for housing and commercial development.

Prior to the approval of the mega port project design, consultations were held with a range of stakeholders, including farmers, boat operators, taxi and minibus operators, businesses and residents.

Several changes were implemented as construction progresses, including the relocation of speedboats currently occupying sections of the wharf slated for redevelopment. The existing wooden facility used by the MV Sabanto, Kanawan and other vessels will remain operational during construction. Additionally, a dilapidated building at the stelling will be demolished and replaced with a modern terminal featuring waiting areas and office space for the agencies operating at the facility.

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Guyana's Digital Passport System

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, June 16 2026

THE launch of an Online Passport Application and Appointment System by the Government of Guyana is a timely and necessary advancement in the country's ongoing public sector modernisation drive.

The move signals that Guyana is finally getting key administrative services up to speed with 21st-century expectations for speed, accessibility and transparency in an age when digital governance is increasingly the global standard.

The Ministry of Home Affairs in conjunction with the Guyana Police Force has introduced a new platform which allows citizens to complete passport applications, upload information and schedule appointments online via the system's portal.

The benefits are clear on paper: fewer long queues, less administrative congestion, better record keeping and a more citizen-centric experience.

This development is part of broader global trends. Countries across the Caribbean and beyond have been digitising their immigration and identity systems.

For example, Barbados implemented e-passport appointment systems years ago as part of its public sector reform agenda, while countries like Estonia have become global benchmarks for digital government services.

Guyana's system is, therefore, not an isolated innovation but a necessary catch-up with regional and international norms.

Importantly, the initiative also dovetails with the government's wider digital transformation agenda, which has included investments in e-government platforms, online tax systems and digitised public records.

The officials rightly stated that the passport system is not only for convenience but also for security, with authentication measures to protect sensitive personal data and improve the efficiency of service delivery.

But as with many digital reforms, the real test will be the implementation, not the launch.

Bureaucratic delays, uneven administrative capacity and high demand at key service points have long been a problem for the public service in Guyana.

An online system implementation doesn't just resolve these problems, it moves them to a new space where infrastructure reliability, staff training, cybersecurity, and public digital literacy become key variables.

Guyana's internet penetration has improved significantly over the last few years and gaps are being closed between hinterland and urban communities.

A truly inclusive digital system cannot exclude those without reliable internet access or digital literacy. This may require hybrid service models, ongoing

in-person support, and public education campaigns to ensure seamless adoption.

Minister of Home Affairs Oneidge Walrond termed the system a "major milestone" in making government services more convenient and efficient. That's a good description.

Around the world, digital appointment systems have been demonstrated to reduce congestion, improve scheduling accuracy and minimise the corruption risks related to manual processing systems.

But milestones in public administration are only meaningful if they result in lasting improvements to the citizen experience.

A vital component of passport administration, the Guyana Police Force has urged citizens to get acquainted with the platform.

That encouragement needs to be coupled with proactive outreach, especially in rural and underserved areas where the transition may be more difficult.

Ultimately, this initiative should be viewed as a foundation, not a finished product. Digital governance is not one reform. It is a process of continuous refinement, expansion and accountability.

With proper maintenance and further development, the country's online passport system could serve as a model for wider e-governance reform in Guyana.

It is a promising step forward.

Turning financial reform into real development

Dear Editor,

IN 2006, my friend, Tarron Khemraj, now a professor, presented a paper at the Bank of Guyana in which he demonstrated why the local banking system's contribution to development was relatively limited. In his study, later published in the Journal of Social and Economic Studies, he attributed this outcome to the size of both the economy and the banking system.

According to Professor Khemraj, Guyana's small economy meant that the volume of bankable business opportunities was limited and relatively risky. Given the prudential regulations that banks are required to observe, financial institutions tended to target low-risk projects and invest their funds in safe securities, both locally and overseas. The remaining funds, described as excess liquidity, often remained idle and unremunerated. As a consequence, many businesses were starved of capital, and the economy did not fully benefit from the financial reforms implemented since the 1990s.

Professor Khemraj also noted that the banking

system was highly concentrated. This concentration helped explain the high lending rates and wide interest-rate spreads. Apart from the collateral requirements that are standard throughout the banking industry worldwide, these high interest rates effectively locked many businesses out of the formal financial system.

Since 2020, the number of bankable business opportunities across multiple sectors has grown significantly, with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) poised to benefit from these emerging prospects. However, one of the most significant constraints preventing these businesses from fully capitalizing on these opportunities remains the combination of high interest rates and stringent collateral requirements.

Recognizing this reality, the Government promised to establish a Development Bank. Within months of being re-elected, it moved to advance plans for the institution. This bank, which could address a critical gap identified in Professor Khemraj's earlier analysis, is expected to provide more accessible financing options for SMEs. Businesses that have

been burdened by high borrowing costs or excluded from traditional lending channels could gain greater access to affordable capital to expand their operations.

The Development Bank is also expected to help de-risk projects through co-financing mechanisms that could unlock a portion of the excess liquidity currently held within the banking system. For the first time, many SMEs may have access to affordable financing on a scale not achieved through previous financial-sector reforms alone.

The Government has allocated the necessary resources and is moving to enact the legislation required to establish this important institution in a relatively short period.

The Development Bank could help transform idle capital into productive investment, expand opportunities for SMEs, and strengthen the link between financial-sector development and national development. In doing so, it may become an important pillar in Guyana's ongoing journey toward broader economic growth and shared prosperity.

Sukrishnalall Pasha



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Canada unveils new strategy for National Food Security

By Milan Maharaj

LJI REPORTER

Canada's food production strategy for the future has a new plan, with the unveiling of the federal government's new National Food Security Strategy. The strategy is aimed at strengthening Canada's food supply chain, supporting domestic food production and improving access to affordable food across the country.

As reported by the office of the Prime Minister, the new plan was revealed by Prime Minister Mark Carney on June 11, and it is expected to help the country prepare better for any economic instability, climate challenges, and other obstacles that may disrupt food production and distribution processes in the future.

In Carney's words, this long-term strategy will be focused on building greater resilience of the Canadian food sector due to a variety of external and internal factors that currently undermine the food supply chain. The federal government representatives noted that the plan will involve efforts to boost Canada's capacities to produce and distribute food, as well as innovative technologies.

Moreover, the strategy will seek cooperation between various stakeholders, including government agencies, businesses, and farming organizations.

Food security has emerged as a critical concern in Canada and abroad in light of certain developments across the globe which have caused disruptions in food production and transportation chains. Supply chain disruptions, natural disasters, and geopolitical conflicts among others have all contributed to the fears of lack of access to sufficient amounts of quality food and affordable prices for such products in various countries.

According to the representatives of the federal government, the new plan aims at tackling those problems through a cohesive and national response to the issue. The government believes that enhancing food security is impossible without making certain improvements in each link of the food chain, including farm production, food processing, and transport of goods.

As a part of the effort, the Canadian government will collaborate with provincial, territorial and indigenous governments along with various stake-



The new plan will help Canadians prepare for any economic instability affecting food production

holders from the agricultural sphere in order to stimulate progress within the industry as well as support economic growth.

The strategy also puts a focus on innovations and research in agriculture. As stated by the government representatives, the latest technologies may prove helpful in boosting production and resilience against potential problems in the future.

The agriculture-food industry in Canada is vital to the national economy since millions of people have jobs there. Furthermore, billions of dollars are contributed to the economy yearly because of food production and exports. According to the officials of the federal government, this sector should be enhanced to increase both economic competitiveness and food security.

The authorities have shown that the establishment of the domestic food system will make people less vulnerable to foreign interference. In other words, the government believes that by establishing more capabilities in its home food system, Canada can stabilize supply.

On announcing the strategy, Carney mentioned that Canada has all necessary abilities, competencies, and agriculture to become a world leader in food security. He emphasized that the aim of this

project was to provide Canadian citizens with reliable access to food, as well as support business operations in the food chain.

Food production and distribution in Canada are always affected by different factors. For example, agricultural associations in Canada mention some of them, including labor, infrastructure, climate change, and production cost as major threats to food production in Canada.

Implementation of the plan, according to federal officials, is going to take place gradually over several years through a series of policy measures as well as investment and partnership programs. Further information about the particular measures will be revealed as

the plan progresses.

This move by the government constitutes one component of their overall economic strategy aimed at improving the competitiveness and resilience of Canadian businesses. According to officials, the food security strategy will serve the purpose of helping the country prepare for the future and achieve sustainable development in the agriculture and agri-food industry.

As the governments and industries around the world find themselves in a growingly difficult international climate, the new strategy, according to the federal government, will create a platform for maintaining a resilient food supply system for Canadians.



President Ali proposes weekly 'Family Days' in Georgetown

PRESIDENT Dr. Irfaan Ali on Saturday floated the idea of introducing a weekly Family Day initiative that would see a major street in Georgetown closed to vehicular traffic, creating a dedicated space for families to gather, exercise, socialise and spend quality time together.

The proposal was announced as the President delivered congratulatory remarks at the centennial celebration of the Caribbean Union Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church at the National Cultural Centre.

Looking ahead to Guyana's continued development, President Ali said the country must focus not only on economic progress but also on strengthening family bonds and preserving the nation's values.

"As we continue to develop the streets of Georgetown in the coming



President Dr Irfaan Ali

weeks, I want to launch a programme, and I look forward to the support of the Seventh-Day Adventist movement, when on Sundays we can close off Main Street, or one of the large streets in Georgetown," the President said.

"Every Sunday, close it off for families to come out and unite, play together, share a meal together, children riding bicycles and doing things together as one big Guyanese family," he added.

According to President Ali, initiatives of this nature are essential to fostering social cohesion and creating lasting memories for future generations.

"These are the things that will shape us; these are the things that would leave lasting moments in a nation's life," he said.

The proposal aligns closely with the Government's broader 'One Guyana' agenda, which seeks to strengthen national unity by bringing together citizens from diverse ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds through shared experiences and opportunities.

Over the past several years, the administration has invested heavily in the development and enhancement of public recreational spaces aimed at encouraging family interaction.

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Data integration underway for Guyana's Agricultural Situation Room

GUYANA'S Agricultural Situation Room is on track to be commissioned by the end of June, with data integration now underway following the completion of the facility's technical infrastructure, Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha has announced.

"We are now putting in the data and will have the commissioning by the end of this month," Minister Mustapha said during a meeting last week with Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) Director Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim.

The situation room is designed to serve as a central repository for real-time agricultural data, supporting evidence-based decision-making, project monitoring and policy development. The initiative is being developed with support from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

The digital infrastructure is intended to support a range of priorities, from crop and livestock planning to monitoring progress on major projects.

The situation room will improve coordination, and provide the analytics needed for timely policy and operational decisions.

"We have everything set up, so now they are now putting [together] data that will achieve our objective with the situation room," Mustapha said.

The situation room initiative aligns directly with President Dr. Irfaan Ali's call for the sector to embrace modern technology, data-driven decision-making and digital infrastructure as central pillars of Guyana's agricultural transformation.



Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha

President Ali has repeatedly emphasised that technology, ranging from smart-monitoring systems to predictive analytics, must be integrated into every layer of the country's food-production systems improving efficiency, enhancing resilience, and driving competitiveness.

Minister Mustapha noted that the collaboration with IICA continues to play a vital role in supporting Guyana's transition to a smarter, technology-driven agricultural sector, and that the sit-

uation room will significantly elevate the country's ability to safeguard production and support farmers nationwide.

The initiative of establishing a situation room was first touted by President Ali back in 2023.

Dr. Ali, while addressing the 2023 regional Agriculture Investment Forum and Expo held in Guyana, had said that in order for the Caribbean region to attain its regional food-security goals, innovation and digitisation will need to

be pivotal factors.

Dr. Ali, during that forum, had proposed multiple initiatives to incorporate data and technology into its local food-production industry.

"We have recognised that technology gives us the opportunity to connect the farmers directly with extension officers instantaneously. And part of the innovative investment that we will make here is to create a proactive information sharing and response platform," the President had said.

USA revokes visa of Surinamese official

The United States has revoked the diplomatic visa of senior Surinamese official Xaviera Jessurun this month, citing her alleged connection to an ongoing corruption investigation in Suriname, according to sources familiar with the matter.

The decision effectively ended Jessurun's legal ability to remain in the United States and triggered her resignation from her role as chief of staff to the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Albert Ramdin.

Jessurun, a longtime Surinamese political figure and senior adviser within Ramdin's circle, had been serving in a high-level administrative role at the Washington-based hemispheric body when the visa action was taken. Her departure marks a significant development inside the OAS, where she had been part of the senior leadership support team.

According to diplomatic and organizational sources, Jessurun's exit had been anticipated even before the U.S. State Department revoked her visa. Those familiar with internal discussions said she had already concluded that her position had become increasingly difficult to maintain amid mounting scrutiny and reputational pressure linked to the inves-

tigation in Suriname.

While U.S. authorities have not publicly detailed the underlying allegations, multiple reports indicate that Jessurun has been linked to an ongoing corruption probe in Suriname involving alleged misconduct in public administration. The nature of the investigation has not been fully disclosed in English-language reporting, and no formal conviction has been reported in international court records.

The visa revocation, however, represents a significant escalation in diplomatic consequences. Diplomatic visas are typically granted to accredited foreign officials and can be withdrawn if the host country determines that the individual no longer meets eligibility requirements or is connected to matters of concern, including active criminal investigations.

Following the revocation, Jessurun resigned from her position at the OAS. Sources within the organization described her role as increasingly "untenable," with internal pressure mounting as the situation developed.

The OAS has not issued a detailed public statement on the circumstances surrounding her departure.

Neither Jessurun nor Surinamese government authorities have made extensive public comments addressing the allegations or the visa decision at the time of reporting.

Jessurun previously worked closely with OAS Secretary-General Albert Ramdin, a prominent Surinamese diplomat who assumed leadership of the organization after a long career in regional politics and foreign affairs. Her appointment to his office had been seen as part of his broader effort to assemble a trusted advisory team within the institution.

The developments come at a sensitive time for the OAS, which has faced ongoing scrutiny over governance, transparency, and political tensions among member states. While Jessurun's departure is not formally linked to any internal investigation within the organization itself, the timing has drawn attention from diplomatic observers.

It remains unclear whether Jessurun will face any formal charges in the United States or whether extradition or further legal proceedings will follow in connection with the allegations in Suriname.

As of now, no official response has been issued by Jessurun or Surinamese authorities.



First Lady Arya Ali, on Tuesday, while addressing the 19th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the United Nations Headquarters in New York

Guyana to open first autism school as disability services expansion accelerates

Guyana is set to establish its first specialised school for children with autism later this year, in a move officials say will significantly expand the country's support services and inclusive education system for children living with disabilities.

The announcement was made on Tuesday by First Lady Arya Ali while addressing the 19th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP19) at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Ali said the new facility will be built at the Cyril Potter College of Education in Turkeyen and will form part of a broader national strategy to improve access to specialised learning environments for children with developmental and physical disabilities.

The development comes as the government continues to increase funding for disability-related programmes. In Guyana's 2026 national

budget, \$316.5 million has been allocated toward initiatives supporting children and persons living with disabilities (PWDs), including education, social services, and accessibility upgrades.

Officials say the planned autism-focused institution builds on recent reforms aimed at strengthening inclusive education. In 2025, Guyana opened its first school dedicated to children with hearing impairments and expanded retrofitting efforts across schools and public buildings to improve accessibility. Authorities say those upgrades are intended to support literacy and skills training for approximately 830 persons with disabilities.

Beyond education, the government has also rolled out a series of financial and social assistance measures targeting the disabled community. More than 26,700 persons with disabilities now receive permanent disability benefits, while monthly assistance payments have been in-

creased to \$22,000. In addition, beneficiaries received a one-time cash grant of \$50,000 under a broader social support initiative.

First Lady Ali said the expansion of services reflects Guyana's commitment to building a more inclusive society where persons with disabilities can participate fully in national life. She also called for stronger collaboration between governments, international organisations, technology stakeholders, and disability advocates to advance global accessibility standards.

The new autism school is expected to further formalise specialised education pathways in Guyana, addressing long-standing gaps in services for neurodivergent children and strengthening early intervention and learning support systems.

Officials say the initiative signals a continued shift toward more structured disability education in the country, alongside ongoing investments in infrastructure and social protection programmes.

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Guyana ‘ripe’ with opportunities across all sectors: Finance Minister

GUYANA’S rapid economic transformation is creating opportunities across virtually every sector of the economy, with businesses ranging from small enterprises to major international investors positioned to benefit from the country’s unprecedented growth.

This is according to Senior Minister within the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance Dr. Ashni Singh, who was at the time addressing a recent trade and investment mission here.

Dr. Singh said the country is experiencing an extraordinary period of expansion fuelled by growth in the oil-and-gas sector, large-scale infrastructure projects, and increasing private sector investment.

The minister noted that while oil production continues to drive economic growth, opportunities are emerging across a wide range of industries, including agriculture, agro-processing, manufacturing, tourism, construction, education, and training.

“It almost doesn’t matter which sector you’re doing business in; the opportunities are many,” he said.

He pointed to ongoing investments in transportation networks, energy infrastructure, housing, healthcare, and industrial development as creating demand for goods and services throughout the economy.

According to Dr. Singh, opportunities exist along the entire investment spectrum, from large-scale projects requiring hundreds of millions of US dollars in financing to small and medium-sized enterprises seeking to serve expanding local markets.



Finance Minister Dr Ashni Singh

“Opportunities are growing along the entire spectrum,” he said. “They exist at the mega end, the large-scale investment opportunities, all the way down to the smallest of enterprises.”

The finance minister stressed that Guyana’s growing population, rising disposable incomes, and increasing levels of foreign direct investment are helping to create a vibrant business environment.

“There is a lot of business to be done,” he said, noting that economic activity is being driven by both public

and private sector investments.

He highlighted tourism as one area with significant growth potential, pointing to ongoing investments in internationally branded hotels and efforts to address longstanding constraints that previously limited the sector’s expansion.

He also identified education and skills training as emerging opportunities, particularly as demand grows for internationally recognised certifications and specialised training linked to the oil and gas industry and other sectors.

“There are opportunities even in the training and certification space,” the minister said, noting that strategic partnerships have already enabled local businesses to establish training facilities that previously did not exist in Guyana.

Against this backdrop, he stated that the government’s policy objective remains the development of a globally competitive economy that extends beyond oil and gas, ensuring sustainable growth across multiple sectors.

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- Support social entrepreneurship and civic engagement in communities around the world.
- Engage diaspora communities in the social and economic development of Guyana.

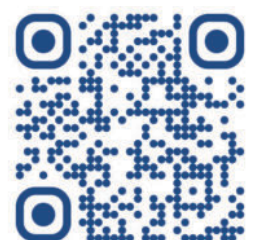
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To find out more about World Guyanese Congress and our goals and priorities. Scan the QR code, or visit www.wgc-org.com

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Health Ministry uses drone technology to deliver medical supplies to remote Health Centre

THE Ministry of Health has successfully delivered essential medical supplies to the Moraikobai Health Centre along the Mahaicony River using drone technology, in what officials describe as a significant step toward improving healthcare access for remote and hard-to-reach communities.

The weekend delivery marks one of the latest applications of unmanned aerial systems in Guyana's public health logistics network, aimed at overcoming long-standing geographical barriers that often delay the transport of critical medicines and supplies to hinterland and riverine areas.

According to Health Minister, Dr Frank Anthony, the initiative reflects the Government of Guyana's ongoing efforts to modernise healthcare delivery by integrating technology into essential services, particularly for communities where traditional transport routes are limited by distance, terrain, or adverse weather conditions.

He said the use of drones has the potential to transform medical supply chains by improving speed and reliability, especially in emergency situations where timely access to medication and supplies can be critical to patient out-



The Ministry of Health has successfully delivered essential medical supplies using drones

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By incorporating drone-based delivery systems into the national healthcare framework, the Ministry said it is seeking to strengthen logistical efficiency, reduce response times, and enhance access to essential health resources for residents in remote regions.

Officials noted that the Moraikobai delivery is part of a broader push to expand innovative solutions within the health sector, particularly in support of hinterland and riverine communities that

have historically faced challenges in accessing consistent medical services.

The Ministry of Health said the initiative aligns with the Government's wider vision of building a more resilient and equitable healthcare system, designed to ensure that no community is left behind in the delivery of quality health services.

Further expansion of drone-supported medical logistics is expected to continue as part of efforts to modernise the country's healthcare infrastructure and improve national health coverage.

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Health Ministry flags concern over social media impact on children

THE Ministry of Health is warning that increasing exposure to social media is contributing to rising mental health and behavioural challenges among children, following a national consultation with medical and social care professionals held to examine the issue.

Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, said the forum brought together paediatricians, child psychiatrists, mental health specialists, social workers, family medicine physicians, autism specialists, physiotherapists, rehabilitation experts, and other stakeholders to assess the effects of digital platforms on child development and wellbeing.

According to the Minister, experts at the consultation raised concerns about a range of emerging issues linked to excessive and unrestricted social media use among children, including anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and reduced attention spans.

“The message from the experts was clear: we are seeing increasing concerns about anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, reduced attention spans, and other serious consequences linked to excessive and unrestricted social media use among children,” Dr Anthony said.

He noted that the findings point to a growing public health concern that requires coordinated national attention, adding that children must be protected from potential harm in the digital environment in the same way they are safeguarded from alcohol, tobacco, and other regulated substances.

“Our children are not guinea pigs for social media companies,” he stated, underscoring the need for what he described as stronger safeguards and age-appropriate restrictions on digital platforms.

Dr Anthony said the Government is considering policy options aimed at strengthening protections for children online, stressing that any measures would be guided by consultation with parents, educators, healthcare professionals and young people.

He emphasised that the approach is not intended to restrict opportunity or access to technology, but rather to ensure safer and more responsible use of digital platforms during childhood development.

“This is not about limiting opportunity. It is about protecting child-



Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, addressing stakeholders

hood,” he said.

The Health Ministry maintains that the wellbeing and future of chil-

dren must take priority over commercial interests, including what it described as “addictive algorithms” used

by some social media platforms to retain user engagement.

Dr Anthony added that failure to address the issue now could have long-term social and health consequences.

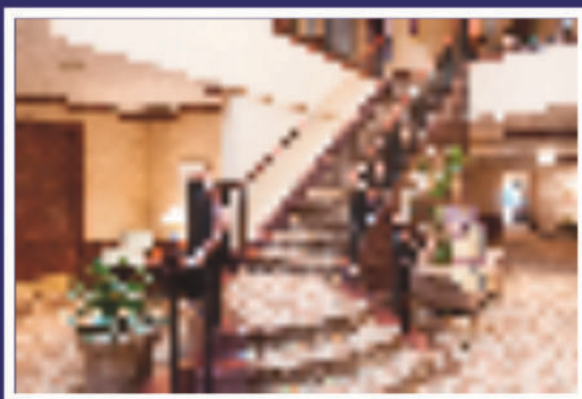
“If we fail to protect our children today, we will pay the price tomorrow,” he warned.

The Ministry of Health said it remains committed to ongoing engagement with key stakeholders as it develops policies aimed at creating a safer digital environment for children across Guyana.

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Gov't engages Carter Center on 2025 elections recommendations

PRESIDENT Dr Irfaan Ali on Monday received a courtesy visit from representatives of the The Carter Center following the completion of the organisation's 2025 elections report.

During the meeting, the Carter Center delegation provided an overview of the report's recommendations related to Guyana's electoral processes.

President Ali was joined by Vice-President and General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C), Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, as well as several Cabinet ministers.

The Carter Center delegation was led by Jason Calder, Country Director for Guyana, and included Brett Lacy.

In its final report published last month, the Carter Center had said that Guyana's September 2025 election-day procedures were found to be 'calm, orderly, and well administered.'

The observer mission noted too that there were no significant irregularities reported and pointed to the revised tabulation process being more transparent and verifiable than in 2020, contributing to greater confidence in the announced results.

"Legal and electoral reforms adopted in 2022—particularly to improve voter registration and tabulation transparency—addressed some international recommendations," the report said.

However, the Carter Center noted that despite improvements, significant challenges remain. It highlighted concerns surrounding the Guyana Elections Commission's (GECOM)'s independence, the complexity and representativeness of the electoral system, and outdated constituency boundaries, among other issues.

"Guyana's rapid economic transformation presents both opportunity and risk, underscoring the need for inclusive constitutional and electoral reforms to strengthen democratic institutions ahead of future elections," the report added.

The Carter Center also acknowledged and welcomed the establishment of the Constitutional Reform Commission (CRC) in 2024.

It urged Guyanese officials to ensure that the commission is fully supported in undertaking its mandate.

Offering more recommendations, the Carter Center urged the CRC to develop and implement a nationwide review process that integrates civic education and participatory dialogue, enabling Guyanese from all regions and communities to contribute to discussions on constitutional priorities and potential reforms.

"It is critically important that constitutional amendments are finalised with sufficient time to allow for subsequent adjustments to the elec-



President Dr Irfaan Ali on Monday received a courtesy visit from the Carter Center

toral legal framework and to ensure that new provisions can be effectively implemented before the next general and regional elections."

The report further stressed that constitutional reform efforts must be grounded in transparency, broad political participation, and meaningful engagement with the public.

According to the report, the Carter Center observers found that the tabulation process in 2025 was conducted in 'a reasonable or very good manner 'across all 17 of the tabulation centres.

Notable was the increased transparency through the public posting of Statements of Poll (SoPs) and the timely uploading of these to GECOM's website.

"While new procedures—particularly the requirement to upload all SoPs before tabulation—caused de-

lays, the system functioned efficiently with few technical issues and allowed close public and observer scrutiny," the report said.

The report added that the post-2020 reforms contributed to a more efficient and transparent tabulation process and was marked by a significant improvement over the 2020 electoral process, strengthening confidence in the official electoral results.

"Overall, the legislative changes made to the tabulation process were positive and contributed to a more efficient and transparent tabulation process that better ensures that the announced results reflect the will of the people as expressed on election day," the report said, while highlighting the transparent recount procedures.

"The 2025 elections built positively on recommendations from past

elections, but more needs to be done to enhance Guyana's democracy, ensure its representativeness, and increase its ability to serve all its people."

In 2022, Guyana had amended the legal and electoral framework governing general and regional elections.

These reforms according to the Carter Center, addressed several recommendations from international observers, including measures to improve the transparency of the vote-tabulation process and significant changes to voter-registration procedures.

"The 2025 election was the first since the traumatic experiences of 2020, and the nation faced important choices about its future and the use of its newfound economic wealth," the Carter Center had said.

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GSA students showcase innovation at agro-processing exhibit

THE Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA) has highlighted the growing potential of agro-processing and value-added agriculture through its Annual Final Year Agro-Processing Exhibition, where students unveiled a range of innovative products developed from locally sourced agricultural materials.

The exhibition, a key component of the institution's academic programme, provided final-year students with an opportunity to demonstrate the practical application of their training in Food Science, Technology and Agribusiness Management. Through product development, research and business planning, students showcased their ability to transform raw agricultural commodities into market-ready products with commercial potential.

According to GSA, the projects reflected a high level of creativity, technical competence and entrepreneurial thinking, underscoring the institution's commitment to preparing graduates for careers within Guyana's expanding agri-food sector.

The exhibition featured a variety of value-added products designed to capitalise on locally available resources while addressing market demands.

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GPHC achieves major surgical milestone with life-saving blood recovery technology

THE Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) has successfully used advanced blood recovery technology for the first time during a high-risk emergency surgery, marking a significant step forward in the delivery of specialised healthcare services in Guyana.

The milestone was achieved on June 12 when GPHC's Vascular Surgery Division, working in collaboration with the National Blood Transfusion Services (NBTS), utilised a Cell Saver system during the emergency repair of a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) in an 85-year-old woman.

The procedure, which lasted approximately six hours, was performed after the patient suffered a life-threatening vascular emergency that resulted in severe internal bleeding. Medical officials said the patient lost an estimated four litres of blood during surgery.

The Cell Saver system, which is widely used in advanced surgical centres internationally, collects blood lost during an operation, processes and cleans it, and then returns it to the patient. By allowing patients to receive their own blood back, the technology can reduce dependence on donor blood supplies while improving the body's ability to recover during critical procedures.

During the operation, the system



GPHC's Vascular Surgery Division

successfully returned more than 500 millilitres of the patient's own blood, with a hematocrit level of 82 per cent, providing vital support during one of the most critical stages of the surgery.

Healthcare officials said the introduction of the technology represents more than a medical achievement, as it has the potential to improve outcomes

for patients facing traumatic injuries, major surgeries and other emergencies where significant blood loss can occur.

For patients and families, the availability of such technology means greater access to advanced treatment options within Guyana, reducing the need to seek certain specialised services overseas and strengthening the country's ca-

capacity to respond to complex medical emergencies.

The successful procedure was the result of a coordinated effort involving vascular surgeons, anaesthesiologists, nurses, laboratory personnel and support staff, all of whom worked together to manage the challenging case.

Guyana sugar plan 'a full rescue mission'

THE Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union (GAWU) has welcomed what it describes as a \$16.4 billion "full rescue mission" for the sugar industry, even as it vowed to hold management's "feet to the fire" to ensure that taxpayers' money is translated into real improvements for workers and estates.

Delivering a tribute to the Enmore Martyrs at a commemorative ceremony on Tuesday, GAWU President Seepaul Narine framed the current turnaround efforts in sugar as historic.

Recalling what he termed the "dark days" of 2015–2020, Narine accused the former A Partnership National Unity + Alliance For Change (APNU+AFC) administration of launching "a vicious attack on the sugar industry" by closing the Wales, Skeldon, Enmore and Rose Hall estates and sending more than 7,000 workers onto the breadline.

He said families were reduced to one meal a day, children were forced out of school, and some displaced workers turned to alcohol and, in a few cases, suicide.

According to Narine, the PPP/C government's return to office "stopped the destruction" and paved the way for



GAWU President Seepaul Narine

the reopening of the Rose Hall Estate in Berbice, which he described as a key step towards recovery and renewed confidence in sugar.

Turning to the current policy thrust, the GAWU President high-

lighted that in Budget 2026, the government allocated \$13.4 billion to the sugar industry for modernisation, mechanisation, factory upgrades and expanded value-added production.

He pointed out that this was fol-

lowed by a supplementary budget which allocated an additional \$3 billion to GuySuCo, taking the total allocation for 2026 to \$16.4 billion.

"This is not just support; this is a full rescue mission. This is the PPP government demonstrating that it will not let the sugar industry die under its watch," Narine declared, rejecting critics who dismiss sugar as a sunset industry.

"They want to import sugar; we want to export sugar. They see a dead industry; we see an agro industrial hub rising from the ashes," he added.

Narine backed his defence of the sector with production figures, reporting that first crop output moved from 15,954 tonnes of sugar in 2025 to 19,031 tonnes in 2026, an increase of 3,077 tonnes or 19.3 per cent.

He insisted that with such significant state support, GuySuCo's management "can do better and must do better", warning that "every dollar must be spent wisely on fixing broken factories, on training our workers, on maintaining equipment and on improving efficiency."

"We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past, where monies disappear without a trace," he cautioned.

Justice Minister urges renewed push toward Jamaica becoming a republic

Jamaica Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Delroy Chuck is calling for renewed parliamentary action on Jamaica's transition to a republic, urging lawmakers to revisit and advance legislation aimed at removing the British monarch as head of state.

Chuck made the appeal during his contribution to the 2026/27 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on June 10, where he pressed Members of Parliament to re-examine the Constitution (Amendment) (Republic) Act, 2024.

"For Jamaica's sake, let us look at the Bill and see how it can be amended, if necessary, and modified so that this Parliament, at the earliest possible time, can debate and remove the monarch. We need to become a republic, there is no need to delay this process," he said.

The proposed constitutional changes form part of a broader and long-running national conversation on Jamaica's governance structure and the role of the British monarchy.

Chuck also indicated that discussions around Jamaica's final appellate court would be taken to the public through a series of constitutional town hall meetings. He suggested several models for consideration, including hybrid arrangements similar to Hong Kong's system, while also emphasizing the importance of a distinctly Jamaican final court.

"The final appellate court has many possibilities. We can go the route of Hong Kong, where the final appellate court consists of international judges and Hong Kong judges and they sit at the final appellate court. I don't mind if the final appellate court in Jamaica, that five Caribbean court judges sit, but it must be a Jamaican final court," he argued.

The minister also called on Opposition Leader Mark Golding to help restart and advance the constitutional reform process, stressing the need for bipartisan agreement.

"We can do a fair amount of piecemeal, putting in the Electoral Commissioner of Jamaica as a part of it, the Public Defender and other pieces. But without the consensus of this Parliament, it doesn't make sense," he said.

Chuck added that while several constitutional amendments are already



Jamaica Minister of Justice Delroy Chuck

prepared, progress depends on building political consensus to ensure reforms can be implemented effectively.

In the meantime, the Ministry of

Justice continues its public education campaign on constitutional reform, including the distribution of more than 400 Jamaican-branded copies of the

Constitution as part of ongoing outreach efforts. "We look forward to a renewed effort to get our Constitution reflecting what we want," Chuck said.

Ireland imposes visa requirements on citizens of St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia

Ireland has introduced new visa requirements for nationals of St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and Nicaragua, effective June 15, 2026, in a move officials say is aimed at strengthening immigration controls and aligning the country's policies with those of the United Kingdom and Europe.

The new rules apply to holders of ordinary, diplomatic and service passports and will also require citizens of the three countries to obtain a transit visa when passing through Ireland en route to another destination.

The measure was announced on June 11 by Ireland's Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration. Irish Minister for Migration Colm Brophy said the decision forms part of the government's efforts to maintain consistency with immigration policies across Europe and within the Common Travel Area (CTA), which allows for passport-free movement between Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Under the CTA arrangement, individuals can travel between the two countries without routine immigration checks, making visa policy coordination an important security consideration for both governments.

The move follows changes introduced by the United Kingdom earlier this year. In March 2026, British authorities removed Nicaragua and St. Lucia from the UK's Electronic

Travel Authorization (ETA) program, citing concerns over rising asylum claims and issues linked to St. Lucia's Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program.

Ireland's latest action goes further by also ending visa-free access for citizens of St. Kitts and Nevis, whose passport holders currently retain visa-free access to both the United Kingdom and the Schengen Area.

Irish authorities have announced transitional arrangements for travelers affected by the change. Citizens of the three countries who booked travel before June 15 and are scheduled to arrive in Ireland on or before July 14, 2026, may continue to enter without a visa.

To qualify for the exemption, travelers must present a valid passport and documentation from their carrier showing the booking date, passenger name, flight number and date of travel. Individuals holding a valid Irish Residence Permit (IRP) are exempt from the new visa requirement.

The decision comes amid growing scrutiny of citizenship-by-investment programs across the Caribbean. In late 2025, the European Union reformed its visa suspension mechanism, formally identifying investor citizenship schemes as grounds for suspending visa-free travel arrangements.



The wreckage of Flight 171 to London

Questions remain one year after deadly Air India crash in Ahmedabad

A year after Air India Flight 171 to London crashed into a medical college campus moments after take-off from the western Indian city of Ahmedabad, killing 260 people, investigators still cannot say with certainty why one of the world's most advanced passenger jets fell from the sky.

An update released by India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) on the first anniversary of the disaster on Friday offered few new clues, saying only that analysis of flight recorder data, aircraft systems, engine components, maintenance records and human factors remains under way.

A preliminary report published last July found that seconds after take-off, the 12-year-old Boeing 787 Dreamliner's fuel-control switches abruptly moved to the "cut-off" position, starving both engines of fuel and triggering total power loss.

Cockpit audio captured one pilot asking the other why he had done it, only to receive the reply: "I did not." Investigators did not identify either voice, though many experts saw the exchange as a possible indication of deliberate action in the cockpit.

The crash remains highly unusual.

While take-off and landing are aviation's riskiest phases, fatal accidents immediately after lift-off are uncommon. Boeing found that just 14% of global jet crashes between 2004 and 2013 occurred during take-off and initial climb; Airbus puts the figure at about 5%.

So what brought down AI171 in 32 seconds?

As the investigation enters its second year, several key questions remain unanswered.

John Cox, a former airline pilot and aviation safety consultant, told the BBC that India's AAIB was entitled under International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) rules to take more time if necessary.

"There is intense interest within India as to the cause," he said. "The insinuation that it was a deliberate act by the captain has drawn very strong criticism. The timing of the engine failure is key to determining the cause."

Cox said any report must establish precisely when the engines lost power, when the fuel-control switches moved and whether the aircraft experi-

enced technical issues on the accident flight or preceding sectors. "Those questions must be resolved," he said.

The lack of answers after a year suggests investigators are still weighing multiple possibilities, according to Shawn Pruchnicki, a former accident investigator and aviation expert at Ohio State University.

A veteran Canada-based air accident investigator said that final reports are sometimes delayed because their conclusions are "politically or institutionally sensitive".

But he warned that "continued speculation about the cause risks muddying the waters further, making it harder for investigators to complete their work - and for the final report, whenever it arrives, to command public trust".

Air-crash investigations often unfold in stages. The inquiry into Air France 447, which crashed in 2009, released a series of interim findings before a final report was published three years later.

Air-crash investigations are usually dry exercises in fact-finding. The AI171 inquiry has become anything but.

The preliminary report's finding that the fuel-control switches moved shortly before both engines lost power prompted speculation in parts of the foreign media that a pilot's actions lay at the heart of the disaster. (At the time of take-off, the co-pilot was flying the aircraft while the captain was monitoring.)

That has triggered a backlash from pilots' groups, safety campaigners and lawyers for victims' families, who say the focus on the cockpit has raced ahead of the evidence.

Captain CS Randhawa, head of the Federation of Indian Pilots, argues investigators should pay closer attention to the aircraft's technical condition, including "encrypted health-monitoring messages [that routinely transmit data on engines, avionics and other critical system] transmitted before and during the flight".

The preliminary report, however, did not mention any such messages. "The preliminary report is incomplete and full of loopholes," Randhawa said.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): The line between fantasy and reality can seem a bit thin at times and the danger today is that you might allow yourself to believe in something that is clearly untrue. You must be logical in your thinking or you could lose out financially.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): If a friend or colleague takes too long making up their mind about something you may have no choice but to make the decision for them. There is no reason why you should let their slowness and timidity affect you personally or professionally.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): It's not like you to stand at the back of the crowd and hope you don't get seen but that may be the best position to take today. Someone in a position of power is looking for people to blame for what went wrong, so keep your head down!

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): There is no point getting angry with someone whose mind is not as sharp as your own. As one of the zodiac's cardinal signs you are usually quick to make a decision and just as quick to implement it, but not everyone shares your sense of urgency.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): If you think that you deserve a break then take one and don't feel in the least bit guilty about it. You may not enjoy telling friends and family members that you can't help them but it's no big deal, they will survive without you.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): You know there is something going on behind the scenes but you cannot work out precisely what it is. Stop trying so hard and focus on something else for a while. Most likely you will get that lightbulb moment just when you least expect it.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): You won't find it hard to assert yourself today but because you are smart you will realize that you will gain more in the long-term if you use persuasion rather than coercion. Your way with words will get the desired result.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): Others can wallow in self-pity if they so choose but you know a positive attitude is a must, even when the odds seem to be stacked against you. You may not win the battle you are called on to fight today but you won't lose it either.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): You may be tempted to get tough with someone who has been taking liberties but is it really worth the effort? It won't take you long to come to the conclusion that engaging with them in any reasonable way is a waste of your time.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): The fact that you have such a great idea bouncing around inside your skull means nothing unless you do something with it. Put all your other plans on hold today and focus on the one thing you know you can make a success of.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): You need to be honest with yourself about your current dilemma. The more you try to ignore uncomfortable facts the longer it will take to come to terms with what needs to be done. This is not a situation you can avoid forever.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): The more advice you get from friends and family members today the more confused you will become, so you might as well tell them you have already decided what you are going to do — even if in reality you have no idea!

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Antigua PM backs \$100 million Sandals expansion with overwater bungalows

Prime Minister Gaston Browne is defending plans for a major expansion at Sandals Grande Antigua that includes the construction of overwater bungalows, arguing that the country must continue to strengthen its luxury tourism product to remain globally competitive.

Speaking on his weekly radio programme on Saturday, Browne pushed back against criticism of the proposal, which forms part of a broader investment reportedly exceeding US\$100 million by Sandals Resorts. The project is expected to add more than 100 rooms to the property, including roughly 16 overwater bungalow units.

According to Antigua News Room, Browne said the development is designed to increase tourism earnings while ensuring continued public access to Dickenson Bay, one of the country's most visited beaches.

He stressed that the government has already set limits on where the structures can be built.

"What we've said to them, though, is that they cannot build those overwater bungalows in the middle of the beach," Browne said. "They will be going southwards towards the groyne so that they do not impede the use of the beach by other users."

The prime minister dismissed concerns that the project would restrict access to Dickenson Bay, noting that the bungalows would be built over water rather than occupying beach space.

"These are not going to take up beach," he said. "Dickenson Bay will still be accessible to all stakeholders."

Browne said Antigua and Barbuda cannot afford to turn away high-end tourism investment, particularly as competing destinations continue to generate significant revenue from luxury travel.

He pointed to destinations such as the Maldives, Bora Bora and Seychelles as examples of countries that have successfully built strong tourism economies around premium overwater accommodations.

"We are barely generating maybe US\$2 billion a year in tourism revenues and people say we have too many hotels," he said.

The prime minister also highlighted the revenue potential of luxury units, noting that overwater villas can command nightly rates in the thousands of US dollars. He referenced similar accommodations at Royalton Antigua, which he said already achieve rates of around US\$3,000 per night.

"These units provide a high yield," Browne said. "They're far more excit-



Sandals Grande Antigua

ing. It enhances the product and places us in a more competitive space compared to other regional countries involved in tourism."

He added that increased earnings from luxury developments could translate into stronger hotel profitability and improved wages and benefits for tourism workers.

Addressing environmental concerns, Browne said modern engineering and mitigation measures can reduce risks associated with overwater con-

struction in hurricane-prone regions, pointing to existing structures in Antigua that have survived major storms.

"There are some people who believe they will get blown down during a hurricane," he said. "Even if they were to be blown down, they're insured and they would have to build back."

Browne also said Sandals Executive Chairman Adam Stewart believes the new bungalows could become among the most attractive in the region, strengthening Antigua's position in the

global luxury tourism market.

The expansion forms part of the government's broader strategy to increase hotel room stock and attract higher-spending visitors, as officials continue to court investment in the island's tourism sector.

"As far as we can build out more of those overwater bungalows and they do not impact other users and stakeholders, I think we should encourage them," Browne said. "Because it will help to uplift our product."

Jamaica eyes social media regulations

Jamaica's Ministry of Health and Wellness is moving toward the development of a comprehensive policy framework to regulate and guide the use of social media among children and adolescents, citing growing concerns about its impact on mental health and behaviour.

Health and Wellness Minister Dr. Christopher Tufton outlined the initiative during his contribution to the 2026/27 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, May 12, warning that while digital platforms have transformed communication and economic opportunity, they are also contributing to measurable psychological strain among young people.

He pointed to research showing that 64 per cent of children aged 0 to 14 report experiencing negative effects from social media use on their mental health, while 47 per cent of adolescents aged 15 to 19 report similar impacts.

Tufton said the challenge is not isolated to Jamaica, noting that countries across the Caribbean and beyond are grappling with similar concerns, including cyberbullying, sexting, emotional distress and suicidal ideation linked to online activity.

"Across the Caribbean, studies on cyberbullying, sexting, emotional distress, and suicidal ideation have reinforced growing concerns that social media has evolved beyond a communication tool and now represents a significant public health challenge," he said.

The minister pointed to international responses, including regulatory frameworks in countries such as Indonesia, Greece and Norway, as well as the United Kingdom's

Online Safety Act, which requires platforms to monitor harmful content, implement age verification measures and limit addictive design features.

"Here in Jamaica, it's a free for all," Tufton said, adding that recent local research from 2025/26 suggests a strong correlation between social media use and rising levels of anxiety, depression and digital addiction among young people.

He also raised concerns about online content trends, noting that 36 per cent of Jamaican content creators produce material involving physical altercations, while 29 per cent engage in aggressive online behaviour.

According to Tufton, these patterns are contributing to what he described as a broader cultural shift, including increased vulgarity and the normalisation of harmful online content.

"The time has come for this House to have a serious consideration around the unrestricted access to social media as it relates to our children, in particular, because it is a problem," he said. "The research... we hope will guide a conversation and certainly to advocate for some changes in this regard."

He also highlighted the scale of Jamaica's digital landscape, citing approximately 2.45 million internet users and 3.18 million active mobile connections recorded in 2025. Social media usage is similarly widespread, with about one million users on Instagram and 1.6 million on Facebook, driven largely by users between the ages of 25 and 34.

Plea discussions collapse in Paulwell murder case, Leoda Bradshaw could face trial

Leoda Bradshaw could face trial for the alleged murder of parliamentarian Phillip Paulwell's 10-month-old daughter, Serayah Paulwell, and the child's mother, 27-year-old Toshyna Patterson, after plea discussions collapsed in the Supreme Court on Thursday.

The breakdown in negotiations clears the way for the high-profile case to proceed through the courts. A plea and case management hearing has been scheduled for June 24, when a trial date could be set.

Earlier Thursday, Bradshaw's attorneys indicated that she was prepared to plead guilty under Section 2(2) of the Offences Against the Person Act, which deals with non-capital murder. However, the prosecution and defence were unable to reach an agreement on the factual basis of the plea.

Director of Public Prosecutions Claudette Thompson told the court that while Bradshaw was willing to plead guilty, she sought to do so based on her own version of events. The parties were unable to reconcile their differences, preventing the matter from proceeding.

Bradshaw's attorney, Deborah Martin, said significant differences remained between the defence's position and that of the Crown.

"As such, we were unable to reach the threshold necessary to proceed with the Newton hearing," Martin told the court.

A Newton hearing is a special court proceeding used to determine the



Leoda Bradshaw

factual basis of a guilty plea when the prosecution and defence disagree on the circumstances surrounding an offence.

Under Section 2(2) of the Offences Against the Person Act, murder that does not meet the legal definition of capital murder is classified as non-capital murder. A conviction carries a sentence of life imprisonment or a

specified term of imprisonment, with a minimum of 15 years to be served before eligibility for parole.

Bradshaw, a former United States Navy culinary specialist, is charged with two counts each of capital murder, conspiracy to murder, kidnapping and conspiracy to kidnap. She is jointly charged with her cousin Roland Balfour, alleged triggerman David Smith

and Bjorn Black.

Patterson and her daughter were reported missing on September 9, 2023.

Prosecutors allege that the mother and child were abducted from their home on Gilmour Drive in St Andrew and taken to Warieka Hills, where they were shot and killed before their bodies were burned.

Barbados President given Inter-American Award

President of Barbados, His Excellency The Most Honourable Jeffrey Bostic, has been awarded the Inter-American Defence Grand Medal by the Inter-American Defence College (IADC), recognizing his contributions to hemispheric security cooperation and defence leadership across the region.

The medal was presented during a recent ceremony held at the Organisation of American States (OAS) headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Officials said Bostic was honoured for his longstanding engagement with the college, including his time as a student and defence attaché, as well as his broader role in strengthening regional partnerships in security and defence cooperation.

During the ceremony, the Barbados leader reflected on the influence of the Inter-American Defence College on his professional development and leadership trajectory, describing it as a key institution in shaping regional security thinking.

The award also highlighted his continued involvement with hemi-

spheric institutions and his advocacy for collaborative approaches to security challenges across the Americas.

In remarks shared on his official Instagram account, President Bostic said the recognition carried deep personal and national significance.

"I was deeply honoured to receive the Inter-American Defense Grand Medal from the Inter-American Defense College (IADC) during a recent visit to the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C.," he wrote.

He noted his long-standing relationship with the institution, including his experience as a student and defence attaché, and praised the college's role in developing leaders across the hemisphere.

"One of the College's greatest strengths is its ability to help leaders see the connections between these challenges. Security, after all, is about far more than the absence of conflict. Security is the presence of justice, of opportunity, of resilience," he said.

Bostic added that for small states such as Barbados, institutions like the

IADC play an important role in fostering cooperation, knowledge-sharing and regional influence in global security discussions.

He said the honour represents not only a personal achievement but also recognition of Barbados' broader commitment to peace, stability and collaboration in the hemisphere.

The president also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to address the graduation ceremony for the college's 65th cohort, where he reiterated the importance of international cooperation in addressing evolving security challenges.



Jeffrey Bostic



Guyana to nominate its Ambassador for UN Secretary-General post

President Dr. Irfaan Ali has announced that Guyana will formally nominate Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations when the term of current Secretary-General António Guterres ends on December 31, 2026.

In a national address, President Ali said the decision was made after "careful consideration" and consultations with colleagues and comes at a time when Guyana's international profile has grown significantly on the world stage.

The President said the nomination reflects Guyana's confidence in its ability to contribute leadership at the highest levels of international diplomacy and is consistent with the country's longstanding commitment to strengthening the multilateral system.

"This decision comes against the background of Guyana's rising international profile and is consistent with its longstanding commitment to strengthening the multilateral system at a time when the world faces increasingly complex and interconnected challenges," President Ali stated.

Ali pointed to Guyana's recent service on the United Nations Security Council as evidence of the country's growing influence in international affairs.

Guyana served on the Security Council from 2024 to 2025, a period during which the country advocated for peace, dialogue, respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

According to the President, Guyana's contributions during its tenure demonstrated that the country is capable of providing leadership within the global system despite its size.

Beyond the Security Council, he noted that Guyana has become an increasingly important voice on issues including climate change, biodiversity conservation, food security, energy security, sustainable development and the interests of developing countries and small states.

"As a country that has demonstrated that economic development and environmental stewardship can advance hand in hand, Guyana has become a respected voice in global discussions on balancing growth, sustainability and



Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett

equity," the President said.

President Ali said Rodrigues-Birkett possesses the experience, expertise and diplomatic skills necessary to lead the United Nations at a time of growing global challenges.

She has served as Guyana's Permanent Representative to the United Nations since 2020 and played a central role in Guyana's work on the Security Council.

The President said her performance at the UN has demonstrated strong leadership, consensus-building abilities and the capacity to engage effectively with a wide range of international stakeholders.

He noted that she has acquired extensive knowledge of the United Nations system, including its principal organs, agencies and programmes, through her current role.

Before becoming Guyana's Permanent Representative, Rodrigues-Birkett served as Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization's Liaison Office in Geneva from 2017 to 2020, where she worked closely with international agencies on food security, sus-

tainable development and international cooperation.

She also previously served as Guyana's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Amerindian Affairs, overseeing the country's external relations while championing policies aimed at improving the welfare and participation of Indigenous peoples in national development.

Throughout her career, President Ali said, she has consistently advocated for inclusion, gender equality, sustainable development and social advancement.

According to President Ali, Rodrigues-Birkett's vision for the United Nations centres on strengthening multilateralism, improving the effectiveness of international institutions and promoting more inclusive global governance.

Her priorities include addressing conflict prevention, climate change, food insecurity, sustainable development, humanitarian crises and emerging threats to international peace and security.

"The next Secretary-General must possess not only a thorough under-

standing of the challenges confronting the international community, but also the ability to build trust among member states, strengthen confidence in multilateral institutions and lead the organisation with vision," the President said.

President Ali announced that the Government of Guyana will actively engage member states of the United Nations in support of Rodrigues-Birkett's candidature.

If successful, Rodrigues-Birkett would become the first Guyanese and among the few Caribbean nationals to serve as Secretary-General of the United Nations, one of the most influential diplomatic positions in the world.

The position is appointed by the United Nations General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council and serves as the chief administrative officer and global spokesperson for the 193-member organisation.

The current Secretary-General, António Guterres of Portugal, is due to complete his second term at the end of 2026.



Barbados envoy rejects reports of 15,000 CARICOM nationals settling there

Barbados' Ambassador to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), David Comissiong, has pushed back against reports claiming that nearly 15,000 nationals from other Caribbean countries have taken up residency in Barbados, saying the actual number is closer to 800 and that much of the reporting has misrepresented temporary travel data.

The clarification comes amid ongoing public discussion about the impact of CARICOM's expanded free movement framework, which allows citizens of Barbados, Belize, Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to live, work, and travel freely across participating member states without visas or work permits.

The arrangement forms part of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and took effect on October 1, 2025, under the Enhanced Cooperation Protocol to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

Speaking on state-owned CBC TV, Comissiong said confusion arose after immigration figures were interpreted as evidence of long-term settlement rather than short-term travel flows.

"There was some confusing information because the press put out the figure of nearly 15,000 people," he said. "But you can't take that figure. Not everyone who travels to Barbados exercises the right to become a permanent resident."

He explained that many of the individuals included in earlier estimates were short-term visitors or transit passengers rather than people who remained in the country under the free movement arrangement.

Comissiong said the number of individuals who have formally taken up residency under the policy since its implementation stands at 776.

"Even that figure is somewhat misleading," he added, noting that a significant portion were nationals already living in Barbados who later regularized their immigration status by obtaining certificates of indefinite residence and work. Under the policy, eligible CARICOM nationals who choose to remain in Barbados must register with the Ministry of Labour, where they are issued documentation confirming their right to indefinite residence and employment.

Comissiong said there have been no reported issues with the initiative since its launch and indicated that regional stakeholders are expected to be brought together for a comprehensive review of the program in the coming months.

The free movement arrangement is seen as a key pillar of deeper regional integration within CARICOM, aimed at facilitating labor mobility and strengthening economic ties across member states.



Barbados Ambassador to CARICOM, David Comissiong

Jamaica moves ahead with JPS licence talks in energy reform move

The Government is pressing ahead with negotiations for a new electricity licence for the Company Jamaica Public Service Company, as officials also move forward with broader plans to overhaul the country's power sector ahead of the current licence's 2027 expiration.

Energy, Transport and Telecommunications Minister Daryl Vaz told Parliament on Wednesday that discussions with JPS are under way, alongside legal, policy and stakeholder consultations aimed at reshaping the regulatory framework governing electricity supply.

He said the Government has already reviewed the existing licence and identified several weaknesses, including high electricity costs, limited incentives for efficiency, slow renewable energy integration, significant system losses passed on to consumers, and insufficient provisions for grid resilience and competition.

To address these issues, Vaz outlined a two-track approach. The first involves negotiating a new licence aligned with national energy goals and consumer protection priorities. The second prepares alternative arrangements in the event talks do not deliver what the Government considers accept-

able outcomes.

"The Government remains committed to creating an electricity sector that is more affordable, reliable, resilient, competitive, and responsive," Vaz said, adding that continuity of service and protection of the public interest remain central to the process.

A dedicated negotiating team has been established, including representatives from the Energy Ministry, the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, the Attorney General's Chambers, the Consumer Advisory Committee on Utilities, local experts, and international legal and technical advisers.

The Government is also preparing a Green Paper on Electricity Sector Reform, which is expected to be completed in July before being submitted to Cabinet for review.

Vaz said the reforms aim to strengthen accountability in the sector, improve affordability, promote competition, and prevent the re-emergence of an entrenched monopoly.

He also pointed to the June 5 islandwide blackout as a catalyst for renewed scrutiny of Jamaica's electricity framework. The incident, he said, has intensified discussions around consumer protection, regulatory oversight,

and compensation for losses linked to major system failures.

The minister added that the Government is reviewing both the Electricity Act and the Office of Utilities Regulation Act to ensure stronger enforcement tools, clearer performance standards, and improved accountability mechanisms.

He further stressed that future licensing arrangements must include resilience requirements, customer service obligations, and penalties for significant system disruptions.

As the Atlantic hurricane season continues, Vaz urged greater national preparedness, noting that the recent outage underscored the vulnerability of critical infrastructure to external shocks.

He also called on Jamaicans to take personal responsibility for emergency readiness while government and utility providers strengthen system resilience.

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Authorities probe possible oil spill off Trinidad coast as Venezuela raises alarm

Authorities in Trinidad and Tobago are investigating a possible oil spill off the nation's coast after reports and video footage emerged on Friday, while Venezuela says satellite data suggests the spill may already be affecting regional waters.

Energy Minister Dr. Roodal Moonilal said the Ministry of Energy, Heritage Petroleum, and the Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard have launched a joint operation to determine the source and nature of the substance spotted near the waterfront.

"We are coordinating a joint activity to ascertain the facts," Moonilal said. "We have deployed sea vessels and drones to conduct reconnaissance. We have received a report from our Venezuelan counterparts and are urgently investigating."

He added that officials are in contact with the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs as part of the regional response effort.

The development has quickly escalated into a cross-border environmental concern after Venezuela's government said on Friday that an oil spill originating near Trinidad and Tobago could be drifting toward its coastline and threatening fishing grounds and marine ecosystems.

In a statement reported by Reuters, Venezuela said satellite imagery confirmed the spill and suggested it was larger than a previous incident in May.

"This event exceeds in magnitude the one that occurred in May and confirms the drift of pollutants toward Venezuelan waters," the Venezuelan government said, warning that the spill could put fishing communities and the



Trinidad officials are investigating the source of the oil spill

environment at risk.

Caracas did not provide detailed estimates of the spill but said the movement of pollutants into the Gulf of Paria raised urgent concerns for coastal communities on both sides of the maritime boundary.

Moonilal acknowledged that, if confirmed as oil, the substance could drift across into Venezuelan waters depending on sea conditions and currents, underscoring the regional nature of the incident.

Investigations are continuing as

authorities attempt to confirm the source, scale, and trajectory of the substance.

Officials have not yet confirmed whether the material is crude oil or another hydrocarbon product.



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Artan to receive full World Cup payment despite missing tournament action

Somali referee Omar Artan will still receive his full World Cup tournament fee despite being unable to take part in the competition after he was denied entry into the United States.

A person familiar with the situation confirmed that Artan remains entitled to payment, although the final amount will be determined after the tournament concludes next month.

The individual spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the matter.

Artan arrived in Miami from Istanbul last week expecting to join the group of officials preparing for the nearly six-week global tournament.

Instead, the 34-year-old referee was refused entry at Miami International Airport.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said Artan was considered “inadmissible due to vetting concerns.”

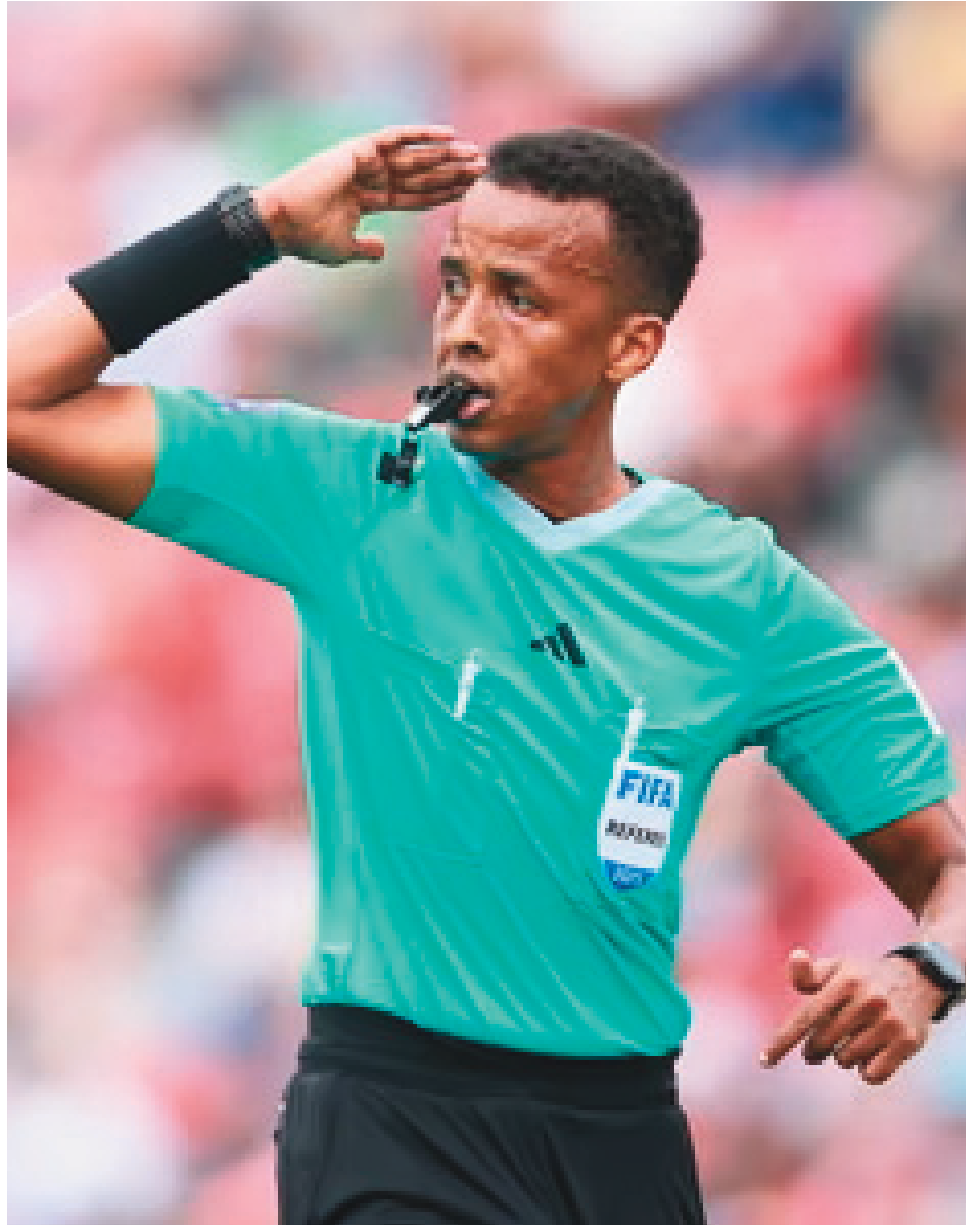
The decision prevented one of football’s most respected officials from participating in the tournament despite his previous approval to travel.

According to the Somalia Embassy in Kenya, which processed the application, Artan had originally been issued a visa for entry into the United States.

The setback was particularly significant given Artan’s standing in world football.

He was recognized as Africa’s best male referee in 2025 and had established himself as one of the sport’s leading match officials.

His World Cup appointment represented another major milestone in a ca-



Omar Artan — banned from the USA

reer built on consistency and professionalism.

However, FIFA confirmed that it was not involved in immigration decisions and that entry approval remained

the responsibility of the host nation.

As a result, the governing body said Artan would not be able to complete training requirements or officiate matches at the tournament.

Although Artan never stepped onto the field during the competition, FIFA’s position is that he will still be compensated.

The payment structure will be finalized once the tournament ends.

The decision ensures that his absence from the competition does not erase his status as one of the officials selected for football’s biggest stage.

Artan returned to Somalia last week, where he received a hero’s welcome after the disappointment.

Rather than allowing the experience to define him, he looked ahead to the future.

The referee expressed his intention to return to the World Cup stage in 2030, when the tournament will be primarily hosted by Morocco, Portugal, and Spain.

He has also received recognition from European football authorities, with Artan appointed to officiate one of the continent’s showcase matches, the UEFA Super Cup in August.

UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin praised Artan’s abilities and emphasized football’s role in bringing people together.

“Football is made to connect people, and UEFA wants to show its respect to Omar and his outstanding officiating skills,” Čeferin said.

Artan’s World Cup journey ended before it began.

But his reputation remains intact.

A denied entry did not erase his achievements, his recognition, or his place among football’s top referees.

For Artan, the next major stage may already be waiting.

Campbelle creates World Cup classic in WI vs NZ game

Shemaine Campbelle delivered a performance worthy of the biggest stage, producing the finest T20 International innings of her career to inspire the West Indies Women to a stunning seven-wicket victory over defending champions New Zealand at the ICC Women’s T20 World Cup on Saturday.

The experienced right-hander struck an unbeaten 90 from 62 balls, guiding the West Indies to a remarkable chase of 163 for three with one delivery remaining after New Zealand had posted 162 for six.

Her unforgettable innings included seven fours and three sixes, turning a difficult chase into one of the tournament’s defining moments.

The victory was even more impressive given the absence of two key players, with Stafanie Taylor unavailable and vice-captain Chinelle Henry sidelined through injury.

The West Indies attack laid the foundation before Campbelle completed the job.

After winning the toss and choosing to field, the Caribbean side initially

struggled to contain New Zealand’s openers as Isabella Gaze and Georgia Plimmer raced to 49 inside the power-play.

However, Aaliyah Alleyne changed the match with a superb spell of steady medium pace.

She ended the opening stand by removing Plimmer for eight before producing a brilliant eighth over that turned the innings around.

Alleyne dismissed both Melie Kerr and Gaze, with Karishma Ramharack taking both catches at mid-on, leaving New Zealand in trouble at 56 for three.

She finished with outstanding figures of 4-27.

New Zealand needed a recovery, and Brooke Halliday provided it.

Halliday combined with captain Sophie Devine to rebuild the innings through a valuable 45-run partnership.

The stand ended when West Indies captain Hayley Matthews dismissed Devine for 22.

Halliday continued attacking, top-scoring with 40 from 32 deliveries, while Maddy Green added an unbeaten

35 from 22 balls to help New Zealand reach a competitive 162 for six.

At that stage, the defending champions appeared to have the advantage.

The chase began poorly.

The West Indies lost opener Qiana Joseph in the second over after a mix-up with Matthews resulted in a run-out, leaving the score at just 12.

Matthews was then handed an early reprieve when Izzy Sharp dropped a straightforward chance at deep backward square.

The captain survived again when Maddy Green could not hold onto another opportunity at cover.

Despite the setbacks, Matthews and Campbelle steadied the innings, reaching 35 for one at the end of the power-play.

The required rate was climbing, but the partnership kept the chase alive.

Campbelle’s innings was a story of patience, skill, and taking advantage of every opportunity.

She survived an lbw appeal after using a review, escaped a stumping chance on 18, and was dropped on 26.

New Zealand would regret every missed opportunity.

Campbelle and Matthews combined for 74 runs before Matthews eventually fell for 48 from 37 balls, caught at long-on off Jess Kerr.

The responsibility then shifted completely onto Campbelle.

Playing in her 155th T20 International, Campbelle reached her maiden T20I half-century from 39 balls in spectacular fashion, smashing Amelia Kerr for two sixes in the 14th over.

She continued attacking and dominated a 40-run stand with Deandra Dottin before Jess Kerr produced a brilliant catch at long-on to remove Dottin for six.

With the West Indies needing 37 runs from 24 balls, World Cup debutant Jahzara Claxton joined Campbelle.

The pair handled the pressure brilliantly.

Ten runs came from the penultimate over, leaving the West Indies requiring only four from the final over.

Campbelle had turned a tense contest into a historic victory.



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'Guyana's growth to remain exceptionally strong' – World Bank

EVEN as the global economy faces mounting uncertainty from geopolitical tensions, rising energy prices and slowing growth, Guyana is expected to remain one of the world's standout economic performers, with the World Bank projecting that the country's economy will continue to record exceptional growth on the back of expanding oil production.

The assessment was made in the World Bank's June 2026 Global Economic Prospects report, which painted a cautious picture of the global economy while singling out Guyana as a bright spot in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

According to the report, countries across the Caribbean are expected to face increasing pressure from higher fuel costs and inflation as a result of disruptions in global energy markets. However, Guyana's rapidly expanding petroleum sector is expected to continue driving strong economic performance.

"In Guyana, growth is expected to remain exceptionally strong as oil production continues to expand," the World Bank said.

The report comes at a time when Guyana's oil industry continues to set records. From a standing start in December 2019, the country has increased production to more than 900,000 barrels per day in just over six years, making it one of the fastest offshore oil production ramp-ups in modern history.

Production from the prolific Stabroek Block now exceeds 900,000 barrels per day through the Liza Phase One, Liza Phase Two, Payara and Yellowtail developments, with several additional projects expected to come on stream over the next few years.

ExxonMobil Guyana, the operator of the Stabroek Block, holds a 45 per cent interest in the acreage. Its partners are Hess Corporation, now owned by Chevron, with 30 per cent and China's CNOOC, which owns the remaining 25 per cent.

The continued expansion of production has transformed Guyana into one of the world's fastest-growing economies and a major emerging oil producer, generating billions of US dollars in revenues and attracting significant foreign investment.

While the World Bank warned that the global economy is being buffeted by the effects of conflict in the Middle East, which has triggered sharp increases in energy prices and renewed inflationary pressures, Guyana's status as an energy exporter places it in a stronger position than many countries that rely heavily on imported fuel.

The institution projected that global economic growth would slow from 2.9 per cent in 2025 to 2.5 per cent in 2026, marking the weakest pace



The assessment was made in the World Bank's June 2026 Global Economic Prospects report

of expansion since the COVID-19 pandemic. Emerging market and developing economies are also expected to see slower growth this year as higher energy costs, tighter financial conditions and weaker trade weigh on economic activity.

Across Latin America and the Caribbean, growth is projected at 2.2 per cent in 2026 before improving modestly in the following years. The World Bank noted that most Caribbean economies remain vulnerable to elevated fuel prices because they are net energy importers. Nevertheless, economic activity in the sub-region is expected to strengthen on the back of tourism recovery and resilient domestic demand.

Guyana, however, continues to chart a different course.

The report classified Guyana among the world's energy-exporting emerging market and developing economies, underscoring the country's growing role in global energy markets.

The latest forecast adds to a growing body of international assessments that continue to identify Guyana as one of the fastest-growing economies globally, driven by increasing crude oil production and sustained investments in infrastructure, energy, housing, health-care and other transformative sectors.

Back in April, the World Bank's Latin America and the Caribbean Economic Update – April 2026 had reported that Guyana remains the standout performer in the region, with projected growth of 16.3 per cent in 2026, continuing a multi-year trend of

extraordinary expansion. This double-digit growth is forecasted to continue in 2027 to 23.5 per cent.

Guyana recorded more than G\$159 billion in oil revenues during the first quarter of 2026, according to figures published in the Official Gazette, with receipts covering the period December 30, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

The Ministry of Finance reported that the bulk of the inflows came from profit oil earnings across ExxonMobil-operated developments, including the Liza Destiny, Liza Unity, Prosperity and One Guyana floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) vessels.

Individual cargo payments ranged between G\$12.3 billion and G\$15.1 billion, reflecting sustained production levels offshore.

A significant portion of the earnings came from a G\$23.1 billion royalty payment tied to fourth-quarter 2025 production, under Guyana's fixed two per cent royalty mechanism within the production sharing agreement.

Under the country's petroleum framework, profit oil represents the government's share of crude after cost recovery, with revenues deposited into the Natural Resources Fund (NRF) and reported on a cash basis.

Earlier this year, World Bank Country Director for the Caribbean, Lilia Burunciuc, had emphasised that Guyana has moved from being one of the lowest-income economies in the hemisphere to one of the fastest-growing in the world, while seeking to ensure that the benefits of growth are

broad-based and sustainable.

Burunciuc recalled first visiting Guyana almost five years ago, just as the country was preparing to receive its first oil revenues. She noted that at the time, Guyana's income per capita was among the lowest in the region.

"Almost five years ago, Guyana was the first country I came to in the entire region, and it was the moment when Guyana discovered oil and was preparing to start receiving the revenues, but it was still a country which had one of the lowest income per capita in that hemisphere," she said.

The World Bank official said the transformation since then has been striking, citing rapid growth, improved living standards, and a visible shift in the physical landscape.

Recent years have seen major investments in transport and hospitality infrastructure, including new bridges, upgraded roads and hotel developments, helping to support both domestic connectivity and international business.

"I could feel the change in the air. The change was coming. And five years later, when I see the country, the country has changed," she said adding: "The country is very different from what it was five years ago. I can only imagine what this country will be in another five years or 10 years. The development is remarkable. I must commend the government for investing in what really matters when you have an economy that gets significant revenues."



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