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Trump offers missiles as Shield of The Americas launched

US President Donald Trump hosted Latin American leaders on Saturday at his Miami-area golf club for what the White House called the "Shield of the Americas" summit.

The meeting comes days after Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth hosted a summit on drug trafficking enforcement with Latin American leaders at the US Southern Command, also in Doral, Florida.

Trump appeared briefly at the summit, fulfilling his commitment to Western Hemisphere politics, despite the current war unfolding in Iran, where the US is now involved.

During his appearance, Trump signed a proclamation launching the regional coalition.

In attendance were the leaders of Guyana and

Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama and Paraguay (picture above). Notably, the leaders of Brazil, Mexico and Colombia were not in attendance.

The three region heavyweights are currently led by left-leaning presidents.

The Trump administration has pledged a renewed focus on Latin America, which it has described as the "Trump Corollary" to the 19th-century Monroe Doctrine which back then sought to ban European incursions in the Americas.

The White House has billed the summit as the founding of the "Americas Counter Cartel Coalition" which they described as a new military partnership with

leaders in the region.

In his remarks, Trump said Latin America was "a great part of the world," with tremendous potential that could only be fulfilled if cartels and criminal gangs were defeated. "The only way to defeat these enemies is by unleashing the power of our militaries," Trump said, echoing the message of the summit on drug cartels that Hegseth hosted previously.

"We're working with you to do whatever we have to do. We'll use missiles. You want us to use a missile? They're extremely accurate," Trump said. "'Piu,' right into the living room," he said, mimicking the sound of missiles. "That's the end of that cartel person. But we'll do whatever you need," the US president added.

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Advanced nephrology services coming

The government is intensifying efforts to strengthen nephrology services in Guyana by expanding dialysis access, providing financial assistance and improving transplant care for patients living with kidney disease.

These initiatives were highlighted on Monday during a conference held ahead of 'World Kidney Day', under the theme "Caring for People, Protecting the Planet."

The event aimed to raise awareness, encourage dia-

logue and improve care for people affected by kidney disease.

Speaking at the event, Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony, said the observance provides an opportunity to highlight the growing burden of kidney disease in Guyana and the measures being taken to address it.

He noted that several services are already available for patients with kidney problems, including dialysis; however, the government is seeking to expand access.

"At the moment, some of the facilities where we have dialysis are operated with external partners... Going forward, we have been working to introduce dialysis in some of our public hospitals," the minister stated.

Dialysis chairs will soon be activated in the six newly constructed hospitals. He added that 15 new dialysis machines will also be strategically placed in regional hospitals to broaden access to treatment.

"We believe that this is necessary given the challenges that we are seeing with some of the patients," he said.

The government increased financial assistance for dialysis patients to \$600,000 annually.

Previously, individuals received a one-off payment of

\$350,000 and were not eligible for further support.

"That has changed," Minister Anthony said, before stating that, "Now every year we are seeing a lot of persons coming forward to get assistance."

Currently, some 650 patients are benefiting from the financial support, which allows them to choose their preferred dialysis provider.

The health ministry is also collaborating with treatment centres to ensure patients can access necessary laboratory tests through the public health system, as a result of the government's investment in national testing capacity.

Despite these measures, Minister Anthony stressed the need for greater focus on preventing the progression of kidney disease.

"A lot more work needs to be done to delay the onset of chronic kidney failure," he said, noting that patients must be supported more intensively to prevent the condition from worsening.

Guyana has also made progress in kidney transplantation. The transplant programme, which began in 2011, has expanded in recent years. "We are now one of the leading transplant centres in the Caribbean," the minister emphasised.



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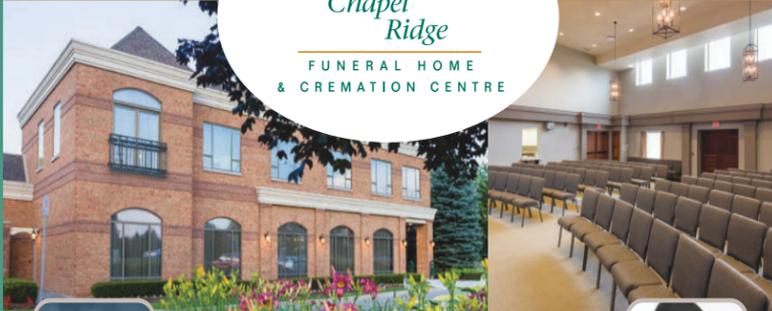
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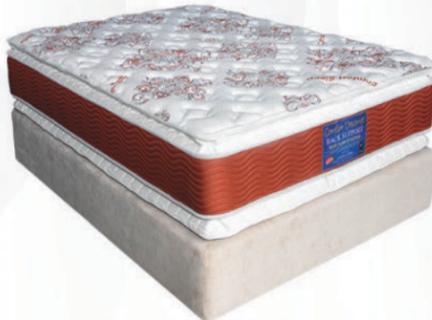
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Barbados, Trinidad explore tourism and aviation cooperation

Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago are exploring the possibility of signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on tourism and culture as both countries look to strengthen cooperation and advance mutual interests.

The potential agreement emerged from talks held in Barbados last weekend between Barbados Tourism Minister Ian Gooding-Edghill and Trinidad and Tobago's Minister of Civil Aviation and Transport Eli Zakour.

According to a government statement, the ministers discussed several issues affecting the region's travel sector, including regional air connectivity, enhanced training for air traffic controllers, and the high cost of intra-regional travel.

During the discussions, the officials also reviewed the state of the tourism industry in both countries and agreed on the need to strengthen relations. Gooding-Edghill highlighted the potential benefits of deeper collaboration, particularly in sustaining Barbados' tourism sector.

He noted that the island's tourism sustainability had resulted in a "wave of investment," in some instances by Trinidadian investors, including ongoing hotel developments across the south, west and north of Barbados. Projects cited include Hotel Indigo, the Hyatt, the Pierhead Project, Royalton Vessence, Pendry Hotel, Blue Monkey Hotel and Beach Club.

Gooding-Edghill said that a MOU between the two countries should be pursued to "see how best we can advance



Officials from both countries reviewed the state of tourism in the islands

our interests on both sides".

The statement said the ministers also held a lengthy discussion on enhanced training for air traffic controllers (ATCs). Gooding-Edghill indicated that Barbados currently faces a training deficit in this area and expressed a desire for ATCs to receive training in Trinidad.

"We would like to advance that as a matter of urgency. We are in discussions with the Ministry of Finance as to the funding for it...and we need to move on this urgently. It is also an opportunity for us to not only train persons but also continue that excellent working relationship that Barbados has always had with

the Civil Aviation Training Centre in Trinidad," he added.

Zakour proposed a MOU specifically focused on training, with details to be finalized shortly in consultation with the Director General of the Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority, Carey Price.

Guyana Appeal Court to rule March 17 on Mohamed case

THE Guyana Court of Appeal is expected to deliver a ruling on the challenge by United States-indicted businessmen Azruddin Mohamed and his father, Nazar Mohamed, on March 17, even as the court on Tuesday declined to grant a stay of the ongoing extradition proceedings.

The duo is challenging a February 4 decision by Acting Chief Justice Navindra Singh, who dismissed their case challenging the Authority to Proceed issued by Minister of Home Affairs Oneidge Walrond on grounds of alleged bias.

The appeal was heard before Acting Chancellor of the Judiciary Roxane George and Justices of Appeal Rishi Persaud and Nareshwar Harnanan, during which attorneys for the applicants — the Mohameds — and the named respondents made submissions.

The Mohameds were represented by Senior Counsel Fyard Hoosein alongside Senior Counsel Roysdale Forde and Attorneys Siand Dhurjon and Damien DaSilva.

The first-named respondent, the minister, was represented by Senior Counsel Douglas Mendes, with Attorney-General Senior Counsel Anil Nandlall appearing for the Attorney-General's Chambers, while Attorney



Nazar Mohamed and son, Opposition leader Azruddin Mohamed

Arudranauth Gossai represented Principal Magistrate Judy Latchman.

In his submissions, Hoosein continued the applicants' arguments that the minister's decision to issue the authority to proceed was tainted by bias.

He argued that the Home Affairs Minister was affected by apparent and presumed bias because of her allegiance to the President and the governing political party.

According to Hoosein, the perception of bias was further compounded by the minister's decision to seek advice from the Attorney-General before issuing the authority to proceed.

The Senior Counsel also referred the court to several provisions of the Fugitive Offenders Act, contending that the decision should have been delegated to another person in light of the alleged bias.

He told the court that the extradition proceedings before the Magistrates' Court were scheduled to commence shortly, and urged the appellate court to intervene.

As such, Hoosein asked the court to grant a stay in the matter in that regard.

Responding on behalf of the minister, Mendes argued that the suggestion that the function should have been delegated to another official was untenable.

"Given the nature of the allegation of bias, such delegation could not have been to any other minister because any other minister would have been subject to the same criticism," Mendes said.

He told the court that the argument being advanced would effectively prevent any minister from exercising powers under the Fugitive Offenders Act.

"So, effectively my learned friend is saying that no minister can exercise the function in relation to the Act... and necessarily there had to have been a delegation to a public officer sometime before," Mendes submitted.

Attorney-General Nandlall, in his submissions, contended that the legal challenge brought by the Mohameds lacked merit from the outset.

Mustapha presses contractors to deliver drainage, other projects on schedule

MINISTER of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, on Tuesday, met with contractors executing a number of agricultural infrastructure projects across the country to review their progress and discuss contractual timelines for completion.

According to a press release from the ministry, during the engagement, the minister underscored the importance of ensuring that all projects are completed within the agreed timeframes, noting that the works form a crucial part of the government's wider development agenda and are integral to strengthening the agriculture sector.

"Among the projects examined were the construction and rehabilitation of pump stations, farm-to-market roads, sluices, and other critical drainage and irrigation infrastructure," the ministry said.

The ministry emphasised that while challenges may arise during project execution, contractors are expected to account for potential issues such as weather conditions, equipment malfunctions, and the sourcing of materials before submitting bids for such projects.

The minister also said that contractors are provided with opportunities to visit project sites to assess the scope of work, allowing them to determine whether they can deliver the expected outcomes within the contractual timelines.

Also present at the meeting were the Chief Executive Officer of the National Drainage and Irrigation Author-



Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha, during the meeting with contractors and officials

ity (NDIA), Timothy Innis; Chairman of NDIA, Lionel Wordsworth; and regional engineers and project consultants.

Last month, the ministry had formally flagged roughly 30 contractors as delinquent, and referred their names to the national procurement board, sig-

nalling an intention to bar them from future drainage and irrigation works.

Speaking during the consideration of estimates and expenditure on NDIA, Minister Mustapha said the list compiled in the last quarter of 2025 was submitted because the ministry no longer wished to contract with compa-

nies that have underperformed on NDIA projects.

"We listed approximately 30 contractors that we said that we don't want to do business with them anymore," Mustapha had told committee members, adding that the ministry will object if any of those firms attempt to

University of Guyana launches search for a new Vice Chancellor

The University of Guyana has launched a search for a new Vice-Chancellor and Principal as the current Vice-Chancellor's seven-year term comes to an end. The decision, announced by the University Council on 16 February 2026, aims to ensure a transparent, merit-based selection process that identifies leadership capable of guiding the university through a period of national transformation.

The public advertisement for the position was released on 9 March 2026. The Council is seeking a candidate with a distinguished academic record, typically at the rank of full Professor or equivalent, along with significant senior executive experience in higher education or comparable institutions. Applicants should demonstrate strategic leadership, expertise in financial management and institutional administration, and the ability to drive organisational transformation.

"The University of Guyana, as the nation's premier public university, must play an even more central role in producing highly qualified graduates, expanding postgraduate education, strengthening research, and contributing independent expertise, innovation and practical knowledge to national



The University of Guyana

and regional development," said Sir Ronald Sanders, Chancellor and Chairman of the University Council.

The Council is looking for a Vice-Chancellor committed to academic freedom, shared governance, institutional accountability, and high standards of integrity. Candidates should also have a proven ability to build partnerships, mobilise resources, inspire high-performing teams, and modernise academic programmes to meet emerg-

ing workforce and industry demands.

"The objective is clear: to secure leadership equal to the scale of Guyana's transformation and to the University's indispensable role in shaping the country's future," Sanders said.

Full application details, including terms of appointment and submission deadlines, are outlined in the public advertisement.



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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

The Shield of the Americas

Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, March 9 2026

GUYANA'S strong support for the United States at the "Shield of the Americas" summit is a crucial step in our fight against transnational crime.

President Dr. Irfaan Ali fully backs President Donald Trump's initiative to break up drug cartels and narco-terrorist networks. This isn't just about diplomacy; it's essential for Guyana's security and well-being.

By joining this coalition of over 17 nations, Guyana shows its commitment to eliminating the problems that have long taken advantage of our airspace, exclusive economic zones, and borders, harming our region's reputation and hindering development.

President Ali's comments to Fox News cut through years of diplomatic

hesitation. They confirm what Guyanese have known for too long: Cartels are not a thing of the past but a continuing threat, causing violence, corruption, and economic harm.

Trump's straightforward approach, which includes military action, modern weaponry, and improved intelligence-sharing, provides the decisive steps our region urgently needs. "We'll knock the hell out of them,"

Trump announced, promising U.S. support to allies at risk. Guyana's involvement raises our status from victim to leader, showcasing our proven efforts as noted in the U.S. State Department's 2025 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report.

That report highlights Guyana's strong actions: Over four tonnes of cocaine seized in joint operations near Venezuela, 2.3 tonnes taken from a

semi-submersible vessel, and the launch of the National Defence Institute in 2024 to strengthen cooperation with CARICOM and U.S. partners.

Our National Drug Strategy 2022–2026 already provides direction for interdiction, prevention, treatment, and anti-money laundering. This alliance enhances our efforts.

Leaders like Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth stress the importance of action over words: Sharing intelligence, conducting joint military operations, and promoting "peace through strength" to protect our Western Christian values.

This partnership offers more than just safety; it opens doors to prosperity. Free from cartel dominance, Guyana can invest oil revenues into sustainable growth, education, and

health—a system based on free commerce and the rule of law, as Trump pointed out.

Critics might argue against militarisation, but history shows that half-measures do not work against sophisticated enemies equipped with military-grade weapons. Guyana's government agencies, from Home Affairs to Human Services, are united, demonstrating our strong commitment.

President Ali's leadership puts Guyana in a powerful position within the hemisphere, turning our vulnerability into strength.

The Shield of the Americas is not optional; it is our defence against lawlessness. With U.S. support and regional determination, we will dismantle these networks once and for all, securing a brighter future for our people.

CAIRCOM is We Own

To the Editor,
THE recent statements by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago concerning regional diplomacy, CARICOM's reliability, and the region's posture towards Cuba require a frank but respectful response, for the issue at stake extends far beyond a single administration. It concerns the credibility, consistency, and future relevance of Caribbean diplomacy itself.

CARICOM has historically articulated a principled foreign policy grounded in sovereignty, non-interference, and regional solidarity. These principles have allowed small Caribbean states to exercise influence in international affairs far beyond their material size. However, principles retain value only when applied consistently. When they become conditional, they cease to function as principles and instead become instruments of convenience.

Recent criticisms suggesting that CARICOM has failed in the face of external tensions, overlook the community's longstanding diplomatic achievements attained through sustained dialogue, mediation, and collective judgment.

CARICOM has worked to reduce

tensions within the hemisphere and has consistently supported negotiated outcomes rather than confrontation. For small states, diplomacy is not passivity; it is the primary mechanism of security. The alternative alignment with external military actors or unilateral foreign policy departures risks transforming the Caribbean into an arena of geopolitical competition rather than preserving it as a zone of stability.

If CARICOM is to be described as an unreliable partner, such a characterisation would more accurately reflect the persistent trade imbalance that exists between Trinidad and Tobago and several fellow member states. In Guyana, beyond the local business community and the recognised Chinese commercial presence, Trinidadian enterprises occupy a significant portion of the domestic market. Additionally, the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago holds substantial influence within Guyana's financial sector. These realities underscore not regional exclusion, but rather the depth of regional economic integration and opportunity that CARICOM has facilitated.

Equally concerning is the dismissal of the Caribbean's historic relationship with Cuba. This relationship is

not incidental history. On 8 December 1972, Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago jointly established diplomatic relations with Cuba despite considerable external pressure. That decision represented a defining moment of Caribbean political independence and is commemorated annually as CARICOM/Cuba Friendship Day.

It affirmed that the region would conduct its foreign relations according to its own judgment, rather than external instruction.

Since that time, Cuba has moved beyond the RHETORIC and has maintained one of the most sustained records of practical co-operation with the Caribbean. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Cuban medical brigades entered several Caribbean states and worked directly within hospitals, healthcare centres and intensive-care units when health systems were under severe strain. Their contribution was not rhetorical; it was lifesaving. Cuba has already been more than a friend to the Caribbean, it has been family.

Cuba now faces a profound humanitarian crisis characterised by shortages of food, fuel, electricity, and essential medicines. Whatever one's political assessment of the Cuban state,

humanitarian suffering among civilian populations cannot be treated selectively. CARICOM has consistently advocated human security and opposed measures that harm ordinary people. Silence or distancing in this context risks appearing less like prudence and more like inconsistency.

It is therefore both appropriate and timely for the Caribbean Community to renew, in a clear and unified voice, its longstanding call for the lifting of the decades-long economic embargo imposed upon Cuba. Prolonged comprehensive restrictions that contribute to hardship among civilian populations cannot be reconciled with the humanitarian principles the international community professes to uphold. From a moral and humanitarian perspective, the continued maintenance of measures that materially affect the welfare of ordinary people is neither constructive nor justifiable. Respectful engagement and co-operation, rather than isolation, remain the more humane and effective path.

Jermaine Figueira
Former Member of Parliament

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Feds, Province invest \$28M to support workers affected by global trade issues

By Milan Maharaj

LJI REPORTER

The Canadian and Ontario governments have announced a joint investment of more than \$228 million directed towards supporting workers and industries affected by global trade disruptions, including tariffs impacting several key manufacturing sectors.

The announcements made on March 10 by the federal government state that \$228.8 million will be committed over the course of three years towards funding a program called the Canada-Ontario Workforce Tariff Response. The initiative is intended to support workers whose jobs have been affected by tariffs or shifting global trade conditions.

Government officials say the program could provide training and employment support to approximately 27,000 workers across Ontario, particularly in sectors including softwood lumber, steel production, and automotive manufacturing. These industries are among those most directly affected by international trade and supply chain disruptions.

Under the initiative, eligible participants may include workers who have been laid off or are unemployed, employees whose workplaces are participating in Employment Insurance work sharing agreements, and workers who need additional training to adapt to changing conditions in industries affected by tariffs.

Training programs funded through the initiative may focus on sectors that are experiencing labour demand, such as healthcare, skilled trades, energy and natural resources. Employers, labour organizations, and training providers may work together on projects designed to upgrade worker skills or prepare employees for new roles within the labour market.

Employers and training organizations can apply for funding through the Skills Advance Ontario program by submitting proposals for training projects. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis according to the Ontario government.

The Canada-Ontario Workforce Tariff Response is funded through existing labour market agreements between the federal and provincial governments. Under these agreements,



Workers in manufacturing are among those worried about losing their jobs because of the trade war

Ontario transfers funding to provinces and territories to support employment services and workforce training programs.

In Ontario, many of these services are delivered through the Employment Ontario network, which provides employment support such as job search assistance, skills training and career counselling.

As indicated by provincial figures, Employment Ontario assisted more than 693,000 individuals during the 2024-25 fiscal year through online services, phone support and in-person programs delivered at more than 700 service locations across the province.

Existing provincial employment programs may receive additional funding through the initiative. The programs include Protect Ontario Workers Employment Response (Power) Centres, Better Jobs Ontario, and Integrated Employment Services, which provide employment support for workers facing layoffs or job loss.

Better Jobs Ontario offers financial assistance for individuals seeking training in occupations identified as being in demand. POWER Centres pro-

vide targeted services and training opportunities for workers experiencing mass layoffs or significant workplace changes.

Expanding funding for these programs could increase access to training and employment support for workers in communities affected by trade-related disruptions according to provincial officials.

The funding announcement comes during continued trade tensions and tariff measures affecting many sectors of Canada's economy. Manufacturing industries such as steel, automotive production, and forestry rely heavily on international markets and cross-border supply chains, leaving them vulnerable to trade restrictions and global market shifts.

Tariffs can affect industries by increasing the cost of exported goods or reducing competitiveness in foreign markets. In response, workforce support measures have been introduced by the government which intend to help workers adapt to economic changes through training and skills development initiatives.

The federal government has also pointed out that labour market development agreements support employment services for large numbers of Canadians each year. These agreements fund training and employment assistance that reach hundreds of thousands of individuals annually though provincial and territorial programs.

Government representatives say the Canada-Ontario Workforce Tariff Response initiative is intended to expand the availability of training and employment support and assistance in Ontario over the next three years.

Employers and training organizations seeking funding must submit proposals outlining the training programs that they plan to deliver. Workers interested in participating in programs funded through the initiative can access service through Employment Ontario offices or participating training providers.

Further details on specific training projects and program expansions are expected to be announced as the funding is distributed.

Guyana records historic low unemployment at 6.8%

Guyana has recorded its lowest-ever unemployment rate of 6.8 per cent, according to the latest Labour Force Survey conducted by the Bureau of Statistics. The milestone reflects a dramatic turnaround from the highs seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey highlighted that during the first quarter of 2020, the unemployment rate stood at 12.8 per cent, rising to 15.6 per cent by the end of that quarter. Women were disproportionately affected, with unemployment jumping nearly five percentage points to 19.1 per cent. Nearly one in five women in the workforce were unemployed at the height of the crisis. Recovery during the second and third quarters of 2020 was slow and uneven, with men's unemployment fluctuating before settling at 12 per cent, while women remained in the high teens, ending at 18.4 per cent. Rural areas consistently faced higher joblessness than urban centres, with rates of 14.8 per cent and 13.8 per cent, respectively, by the third quarter.

The Bureau of Statistics notes that the situation improved steadily from late 2021 through the end of 2024, as Guyana's economy underwent a robust recovery. By the fourth quarter of 2024, the overall unemployment rate had dropped to 6.8 per cent—a historic low.

"This is a significant improvement from the 14.5 per cent recorded in the third quarter of 2021," the report said. Men reached a low of 5.1 per cent, nearly a third of their 2021 peak, while women saw the most substantial absolute improvement, falling from 19.1 per cent to 9.3 per cent.

For the first time in the data set, the gap between rural (6.6 per cent) and urban (7.1 per cent) unemployment rates essentially closed, with rural areas slightly outperforming urban centres.

Youth unemployment also saw a marked improvement, dropping to 12.1 per cent from a high of 31.9 per cent in the third quarter of 2021. The survey noted that the majority of the labour force is employed in wholesale and retail trade, construction, agriculture, forestry and fishing, public administration and defence, and manufacturing.

The survey also found increased labour force participation, with more adults entering the job market than in 2021. By late 2024, over half of work-



ing-age adults were either employed or actively seeking employment.

"In the fourth quarter of 2024, the labour force participation rate was

recorded at 56.5 per cent, up from 49.6 per cent in the third quarter of 2021," the report said.

The data signals a strong recovery

for Guyana's workforce, highlighting the resilience of the economy and the impact of post-pandemic recovery efforts.

US seeks forfeiture of tanker seized with false Guyanese flag carrying Venezuela oil

The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) says a complaint has been filed in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia seeking to forfeit the Motor Tanker Skipper, a crude oil tanker seized by the United States on the high seas in December 2025 while flying a false Guyana flag.

Authorities say the vessel was carrying approximately 1.8 million barrels of crude oil supplied by Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PdVSA), the state-owned oil company of Venezuela.

The DOJ said the tanker and its cargo are forfeitable because they allegedly provided a source of influence or support to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), including the IRGC-Qods Force (IRGC-QF), which the United States has designated a foreign terrorist organization.

"Under President Trump's leadership, the era of secretly bankrolling regimes that pose clear threats to the United States is over," said U.S. Attorney General Pamela Bondi. "This Department of Justice will deploy every legal authority at our disposal to completely dismantle and permanently shutter any operation that defies our laws and fuels chaos across the globe."

Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Kash Patel said the case demonstrates the agency's determination to

enforce sanctions and disrupt networks linked to hostile governments.

"The FBI, working alongside our interagency partners, will continue aggressively identifying, disrupting and dismantling the financial networks used by our foreign adversaries to fund terrorist organisations and destabilise international security. We remain steadfast in safeguarding both the integrity of the international financial system and the security of the American people," Patel said.

Assistant U.S. Attorney General A Tysen Duva of the Justice Department's Criminal Division said the action represents an important step in cutting off millions of dollars in funding to terrorist organisations.

"The criminal division will continue to use every tool at our disposal to end to terrorist financing," Duva said.

According to the DOJ, the forfeiture complaint alleges that since at least 2021, the Skipper was involved in a scheme to facilitate the shipment and sale of petroleum products for the benefit of the IRGC and its Qods Force.

During that time, officials say the tanker transported crude oil from both Iran and Venezuela and used ship-to-ship transfers to deliver the cargo to various locations around the world, including other governments viewed by the United States as adversarial.



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King Charles urges Commonwealth to meet global challenges with unity

On March 8, 2026, King Charles III delivered his Commonwealth Day message, calling on member nations to confront the pressing challenges of conflict, climate change, and rapid transformation while embracing the opportunities that come from cooperation and shared purpose.

“Working together, we can ensure that the Commonwealth continues to stand as a force for good – grounded in community, committed to the kind of restorative sustainability that has a return on investment, enriched by culture, steadfast in its care for our planet, and united in friendship and in the service of its people,” the King said.

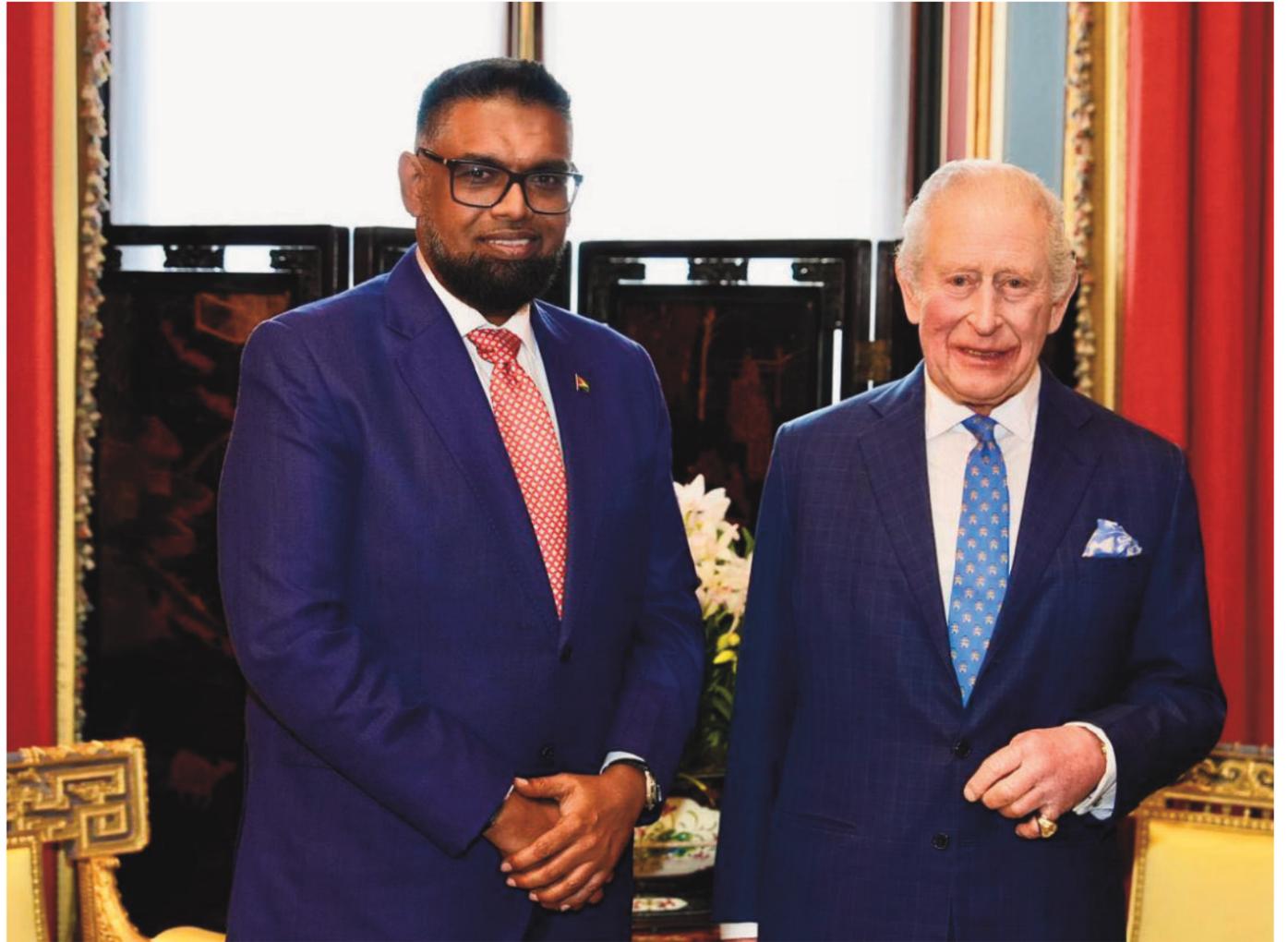
He acknowledged the extraordinary diversity of the Commonwealth, which spans every ocean and continent and embraces multiple cultures, languages, and faiths. Yet, he stressed, this voluntary union remains united by “shared values of justice, democracy, opportunity, compassion and mutual respect.” In a world he described as “increasingly fragmented,” King Charles said the Commonwealth offers a rare forum for honest discussion and debate to improve the lives of the nearly three billion people living in its member states.

The King highlighted the potential of the Commonwealth’s youth, noting that nearly two-thirds of its population is under the age of thirty. “It is our shared responsibility to ensure that they inherit not only hope and ambition, but also a world in which they can flourish,” he said, linking the future prosperity of the nations to both human and environmental stewardship.

Climate change, he emphasized, is a lived reality for many member states rather than an abstract threat. “The stewardship of Nature, the protection of oceans and forests, and the pursuit of prosperity secured in harmony with the natural world are duties we owe not only to one another, but to generations yet unborn,” the King said, calling for coordinated efforts to safeguard the planet.

Looking ahead to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Antigua and Barbuda later this year, King Charles reminded leaders that the strength of the association is not measured solely by what governments resolve together, but also by “the daily endeavours of their people.” He praised citizens for their “quiet determination, resilience and generosity” in service, enterprise, and creativity, which give “true meaning to our shared endeavour.”

The King’s message concluded with a call for collaboration: “Working together, we can ensure that the Commonwealth continues to stand as a force for good – grounded in community,



King Charles III with Guyana President Irfaan Ali during a recent meeting

committed to the kind of restorative sustainability that has a return on investment, enriched by culture, steadfast in its care for our planet, and united in friend-

ship and in the service of its people.”

The Commonwealth presence in the Caribbean spans both independent countries and overseas territories, in-

cluding Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago, all sharing historical ties to the British Crown.

Former JA MP Jolyan Silvera gets 20 years, 10 months in wife’s killing

Former Jamaican Member of Parliament Jolyan Silvera has been sentenced to 20 years and 10 months in prison for the killing of his wife, Melissa Silvera, bringing a close to a case that sparked widespread public debate.

Chief Justice Bryan Sykes handed down the sentence in the Supreme Court on Friday following Silvera’s guilty plea to manslaughter earlier this year.

For the manslaughter conviction, Silvera received a 20-year sentence. He was also sentenced to 20 years and 10 months for the related firearm offence.

The court ordered that both sentences run concurrently, as they arose from the same set of circumstances. As a result, Silvera will serve the longer sentence of 20 years and 10 months.

Melissa Silvera, 42, a land developer, was found dead at the couple’s Stony Hill home in St Andrew on November 10, 2023. Her death was initially reported as occurring in her sleep, but a post-mortem examination later revealed she had died from multiple gunshot wounds, prompting a murder investigation. He married Melissa in 2015. The couple had four sons, though one of the children died in 2017 after reportedly drowning in a pool at their home.

Silvera was arrested in January 2024 and charged with murder and using a firearm to commit a felony. However, at the start of his trial in February 2026, he pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of manslaughter, claiming he had been provoked during an argument with his wife.



Silvera and his wife in happier times

Prosecutors accepted the plea, saying they had no evidence to challenge the provocation defence — a decision that triggered public backlash and calls for the matter to have been determined by a jury.

The sentencing hearing was open to the public, a rare move for proceedings linked to the Gun Court, which are typically held in camera.

Silvera, a businessman and former People’s National Party Member of Parliament who represented St Mary Western from 2011 to 2016, has been in custody since his arrest in January 2024.



Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar with top officials at the United States Southern Command

T&T PM Persad-Bissessar describes meeting with US Southern Command as ‘fruitful’

Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar described her meeting Monday with top officials at the United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) as “productive and fruitful,” highlighting the countries’ ongoing partnership in national and regional security and the fight against narco-trafficking.

In a statement posted on X, Persad-Bissessar said the Trinidad and Tobago delegation attended the meeting “based on an invitation from the United States government, given our strong support, determined action, and dynamic partnership to eliminate the illegal drug trade.”

The Prime Minister noted that discussions with U.S. officials—including General Francis L. Donovan, Commander of SOUTHCOM; Lieutenant General Pettus, Deputy Commander; and Ambassador Stephanie Syptak-Ramnath, Foreign Policy Advisor—focused on strengthening cooper-

ation to ensure “a safer and more secure Trinidad and Tobago at every level.”

Persad-Bissessar expressed satisfaction that General Donovan acknowledged Trinidad and Tobago’s leadership in the region, noting that the country’s efforts have significantly impacted the fight against the illegal drug trade. “Based on this, I reinforced my support for the continued and expanded partnerships to fight narco-trafficking, as my main goal is to ensure a total eradication of this plague that has brought grave destruction to Trinidad and Tobago,” she said.

The Prime Minister emphasized that her “greatest priority was to ensure the protection of my citizens,” calling for expanded partnerships and technical cooperation in areas including cybersecurity, forensics, and ballistics to enhance the country’s ability to combat criminal elements.

“I am heartened not only by

SOUTHCOM’s commitment to broadening the scope of work to ensure a safer region but also by the fact that several specific projects were identified for implementation to support Trinidad and Tobago’s security,” Persad-Bissessar wrote, adding that she extended an invitation to General

Donovan to visit the country.

She concluded that the meeting was “part of my unwavering fight to ensure all the tools possible are available to my government to crush the criminal elements which threaten our citizens.”

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President Ali says security climate has improved following Maduro's capture

THE security climate in the region has improved in recent weeks following major political developments in neighbouring Venezuela.

This is the position of President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali who was at the time speaking during an interview with Fox News on Saturday.

On the sidelines of the Shield of the Americas Summit held in Doral, Miami, Florida, the head of state spoke about several geopolitical issues affecting the Caribbean and Latin America regions, including the developments in Venezuela, governance in Cuba and the fight against drug-trafficking organisations.

Guyana, which shares a border with Venezuela, has been closely monitoring the situation, particularly after the recent capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro.

President Ali said that Guyana had previously experienced tensions linked to the Maduro administration in Venezuela.

However, the situation has improved significantly following Maduro's capture.

"That by itself has brought a change in the mindset, a change in the condition, and we have seen greater stability, less rhetoric," he told the Fox News.

President Ali noted that the Venezuelan government has been making attempts, consistent with agreements with the United States (US) to create a safer national environment for its citizens

These developments, he said, are aimed at improving economic opportunities and promoting democratic gover-



President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali arrives for the Shield of the Americas Summit, on Saturday

nance in Venezuela.

He noted that the shift has already had visible effects on regional stability.

"Wherever there is less rhetoric about conflict, there is greater confidence in the system, and wherever there is momentum towards democracy, there [are] greater prospects for the region," the President said.

Another major topic raised during the interview was the ongoing fight against drug trafficking and organised crime across the region.

President Ali reminded the inter-

viewer that Caribbean and Latin American countries have long raised concerns about drug cartels.

According to him, these criminal operations frequently exploit the region's Exclusive Economic Zones and border areas, exposing countries to transnational criminal networks.

"It's an issue that has exposed the region, has given the region a bad name in terms of drugs. So, we support the strong action on drug cartels," he reiterated before he said, "We have supported the charter to deal with transnational

crime, especially the narco-terrorism and these cartels."

He said the current approach involves more direct action to protect national borders, reducing criminal activity, and improving the region's international reputation.

The President is being accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, Hugh Todd and Foreign Secretary Robert Persaud, among others.

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

World Guyanese Congress

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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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Washington looks to Guyana to power regional energy future

THE United States (U.S.) is looking to deepen its energy partnership with Guyana, as U.S. Secretary of Energy Chris Wright identified the rapidly growing oil producer as a critical partner in the broader strategy for energy production across the Western Hemisphere.

In a video posted on the Guyanese Head of State Dr Irfaan Ali's Facebook page, Wright signalled the U.S.' strong interest in expanding energy production.

This video was posted following a Friday evening meeting between Wright and President Ali in Miami.

"The Trump administration's goal is to grow the production of energy and other natural resources right here in the Western Hemisphere. This is our backyard. We want strong partners, strong nations and strong energy production. Guyana is a huge part of this strategy, a very well-governed country with great energy resources that's starting to produce them...That's a win for Guyana. That's a win for the United States. It's a win for the Western Hemisphere," he said.

Additionally, President Ali emphasised that regional energy security is important for Guyana, noting that part of his government's objective is to expand



President, Dr Irfaan Ali; U.S. Secretary of Energy, Chris Wright and other dignitaries

the country's energy footprint and build sustainability in the energy portfolio, not only petroleum, but also gas.

Speaking on the meeting with Wright, Dr Ali stated that they discussed how Guyana could be positioned to ensure regional energy security including

for both countries, and to ensure that within this hemisphere itself, "we can fill out the infrastructure and the system through which we can be energy secure, and we can build out the opportunities that come with energy."

President Ali went on to say: "Guyana has tremendous opportunities ahead of us in which we could utilise energy to add value in our natural resources, whether it's bauxite; building out our capacity for fertiliser to support the rest of the region; data centres and other investments in manufacturing, industrial development, LNG plan and be that first mover in terms of the infrastructure that will be able to accommodate gas from other partners within the region. So, those were some of our discussions."

He stated that the U.S. has a "strong

interest" in building out the relationship and maximising U.S. investments and investors into this ecosystem.

"The Secretary is very keen on the development in Guyana and opportunities there. So, I think it was a great meeting," he said, noting that they examined the future pillars of co-operation.

The U.S. and Guyana have enjoyed long-standing diplomatic ties, which have been strengthened further in recent years through security co-operation, investment initiatives, and shared interests in regional stability. Guyana gained independence from Britain on May 26, 1966.

The U.S. recognised Guyana's independence and the American Embassy in Georgetown was subsequently established.




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Guyana supports US ‘strong action’ to dismantle transnational crime

PRESIDENT, Dr Irfaan Ali has said that Guyana supports the United States’ strong action against transnational criminals and networks.

President Ali made these remarks on the sidelines of the “Shield of the Americas” summit with Fox News Live.

US President Donald Trump alongside leaders from more than 17 countries across the Americas, on Saturday signed a major regional security alliance aimed at eradicating drug cartels across the Western Hemisphere.

President Trump hosted several Latin American Leaders in Doral, Florida, including Guyana, to discuss anti-cartel strategies to dismantle powerful criminal networks,

A coalition of over 17 nations has joined the new US-led military partnership to destroy drug trafficking.

This summit saw the US welcoming its “strongest like-minded allies in our hemisphere to promote freedom, security, and prosperity in our region.”

This historic coalition of nations will work together to advance strategies that stop foreign interference in the hemisphere, criminal and narco-terrorist gangs and cartels, and illegal and mass immigration.

President Ali, while speaking to journalist Aishah Hasnie, said: “We have to first of all agree, and we agree totally with President Trump... [there have been] many public comments in relation to drug cartels operating, using our airspace, using our exclusive economic zone and this is not something that was there yesterday.”

He emphasised that this is not a new complaint, but rather one which has plagued the region for some time. President Ali underscored that President Trump has taken a direct approach to this issue.

Noting that such crimes have hampered development, Dr Ali said: “It is a history that has exposed our borders to transnational criminals and criminal networks. It’s an issue that’s exposed the region, has given the region a bad name in terms of drugs. So, we support the strong action on drug cartels. We have supported the charter to deal with transnational crime, especially the narco-terrorism and these cartels.

“So, we have to agree first that this is a challenge in the region, and we have an approach now that is direct and one that seeks to take the region out of

this stain of criminality, cartels and drugs.”

Addressing the new coalition, President Trump said: “The heart of our agreement is a commitment to using lethal military force to destroy the sinister cartels and terrorist networks, once and for all... we’ll get rid of them. We need your help. You have to just tell us where they are.”

The US President had also stated: “All of the nations in this room share the same priorities: security, prosperity, free commerce and the rule of law. And you want the rule of law. Sometimes your communities don’t let you have it,

because you got some rough communities. That’s why, together, we’re also forming the Shield of Americas—a new organisation to advance these shared priorities in our hemisphere.”

The US President committed to “knocking the hell” out of drug cartels, and go “heavier,” reflecting on the decades-old complaints across the Americas regarding the narco-terrorism, which is growing in the Western hemisphere.

“We’re not going to let that happen. We’ll help you,” he pledged, adding: “And bloodthirsty cartels that impose their will through murder, tor-

ture, extortion, drug trafficking, bribery and terror; and some of you are in danger. I mean, you’re actually in danger, hard to believe, but we’re working with you to do whatever we have to do.”

President Trump further warned that over the years, cartels have developed highly sophisticated military-grade weapons, noting that: “These brutal criminal organisations pose an unacceptable threat to national security, and they provide a dangerous gateway for foreign adversaries in our region, and we don’t want them near our country either. We don’t want them to come in. They’re cancer...”

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'We are committed to building a better Guyana for women, girls' - First Lady

FIRST Lady Arya Ali has reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to advancing the rights and protection of women and girls, calling for sustained collective action to dismantle patriarchal structures and end violence against women.

She was at the time delivering the feature address following an International Women's Day Walk held on Sunday under the global theme, 'Give to gain'.

"Our efforts must continue if we are to create an equitable and just world for the women and girls, who are going to come after us here in Guyana. At the level of both government and civil society, there is no doubt that we are committed to building a better country for our women and girls through legislative reforms, policy initiatives, programmes that empower them, improve safety and expand economic opportunities," she said.

The First Lady outlined a series of initiatives undertaken in recent years to support women and girls in Guyana. These include the provision of free sanitary pads to more than 3,000 schoolgirls, and scholarships for over 200 women, with at least 100 beneficiaries coming from hinterland regions.

In addition, millions of dollars have been invested in women-led start-ups, while homes have been constructed for women-headed households. She also pointed to the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security's ongoing 'WE LIFT' Expo, which is currently supporting more than 460 women-led enterprises.

"These efforts aligned with



First Lady Arya Ali at the Women's event

Guyana's constitutional commitment to gender equality and international frameworks such as the convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action," she added.

However, she cautioned that institutional weaknesses and entrenched cultural norms that reinforce patriarchy continue to undermine progress.

"Our efforts have not been without challenges, institutional weaknesses and cultural norms which

reinforce patriarchy continue to undermine the gains we have made over the years.

Intimate partner violence, for instance, continues to rob families of mothers, daughters and sisters, leaving grief that reverberates across our communities and our nation," she said.

Highlighting the grave toll of domestic and intimate partner violence, the First Lady said such violence "continues to rob families of mothers, daughters and sisters, leaving grief that reverberates across our communi-

ties and our nation."

She referenced the Family Violence Act 2024 as a key legislative step taken over the past five years to better protect women in vulnerable situations and hold perpetrators accountable.

In a particularly emotional passage, she invoked the memories of victims such as Shonette Dover, Kenisha Vaughn, 14-year-old Aleena Preetam, who died shortly after giving birth, and 15-year-old Tiana Chapman, who was stabbed 25 times, cases she said underscore the "difficult circumstances that little girls, not women, continue to endure at the hands of violent men."

Despite these tragedies, Mrs. Ali insisted that "hope is not lost," urging Guyanese to use the occasion of International Women's Day not only to celebrate progress but to reflect on their individual and collective responsibilities.

She called on citizens to take action in their homes, schools, places of worship, and communities, and to support existing systems designed to protect and empower women and girls.

"Once we continue to raise our voices like we are today, and with brothers like those of you who are here today, who understand our plight and have chosen to join our fight, we will be able to dismantle those structures and break the toxic culture that undermines the dignity of our women and girls," she added.

A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of women and girls who were killed and injured at the hands of domestic abusers.

Drones delivering medication to hinterland communities

DIRECTOR General of the Ministry of Health, Dr. Vishwa Mahadeo, has confirmed that drone technology is already being used to transport medicines to remote communities, as part of the Government's push to strengthen healthcare access across Guyana.

Providing an update during the Region 10 2025 Review and Leadership Meeting, Dr. Mahadeo told regional health leaders that pilot operations have already demonstrated the effectiveness of the system in delivering medical supplies to hard-to-reach locations.

"Only the other day, drone technology was piloted and medicines were dropped off to places like Malali and Ituni, in the river and on the trail. I think the vision of the President and the Minister of Health to have the latest technology available to our people was demonstrated when those drones dropped off medicines at Malali and other places," Dr. Mahadeo said.

According to the Director General, the initial pilot deliveries reached sev-



Drones are delivering medicine to the hinterland communities

eral communities including Moraikobai in Region Five and Malali, Ituni, Great Falls and Wiruni in Region Ten, areas where travel by road or river can often delay the delivery of urgent medical supplies.

He explained that the use of drones

will significantly reduce those delays and allow healthcare providers to respond more quickly when essential supplies are needed.

"So now the trail, distance and terrain won't be an issue, whether it be blood and blood products, whether it be

emergency injections or medicines, it will be delivered because that technology is being invested in. It has been tried, it was successful, more training has to be done but it is available," Dr. Mahadeo added.

The drone initiative forms part of a wider effort by the Ministry of Health to modernise healthcare logistics and expand access to critical services in hinterland and riverain communities, all part of HE President Irfaan Ali's vision to provide world class health to all citizens in Guyana. Through partnerships with international technology providers, specialised drone systems capable of transporting medical cargo over long distances are being introduced to support the delivery of medicines and other essential supplies.

With successful pilot tests already completed, the Ministry is expected to continue expanding the programme while training personnel to fully integrate the technology into Guyana's healthcare delivery system.



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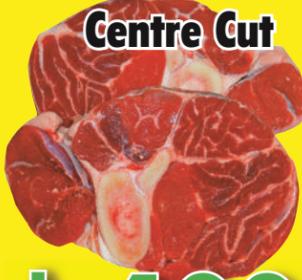
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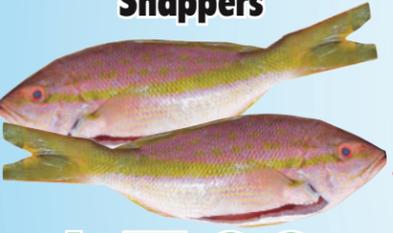
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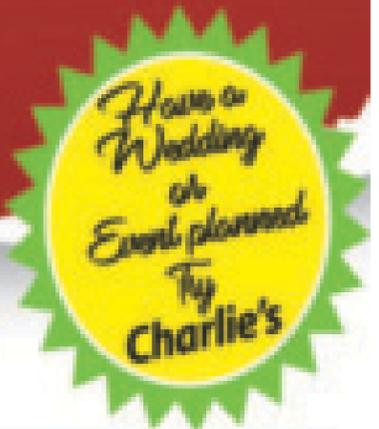


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Wismar-Mackenzie Bridge 97% complete; June opening targeted

PHYSICAL works on the new US\$35 million Wismar-Mackenzie Bridge at Linden, Region 10, have reached 97 per cent completion, bringing the long-anticipated crossing closer to commissioning.

The update was provided to Minister of Public Works, Bishop Juan Edghill, after a targeted assessment visit to the project site last Friday.

During the visit, the minister convened a multi-stakeholder meeting with technical staff from the Ministry of Public Works, contractors China Railway Construction (Caribbean) Company Ltd and GuyCo Construction Inc., along with the project’s consultancy firm, Politecnica.

Minister Edghill and representatives from the various entities also conducted an on-site walkthrough of the 233-metre-long concrete bridge where works are nearing completion. According to the ministry, concrete placement for the structure is now at 97 per cent.

The team also inspected the secondary road connections leading to and from the bridge.

A project debrief revealed that works on the western end of the project, on the Wismar side, are advancing steadily.

Construction of the West Watooka



The US\$35 million Wismar-Mackenzie Bridge at Linden, Region 10

Connector and Dacoura Haul Roads is currently 33 per cent complete. Subgrade preparation, subbase, crusher-run base and curbing for these roads have already been fully completed.

Foundation works for the roundabout on that end are also finished, while curbing for the roundabout is at 50 per cent completion. Works along the Burnham Drive approach are also progressing, with subsurface works at 38 per cent and curbing at 39 per cent, while culvert installation continues.

On the eastern side of the project, works are 27 per cent complete. These include foundation and retaining structures designed to support the main approach to the bridge.

During the visit, officials were informed that 3,750 prefabricated vertical drains have already been installed and geotextile material laid as part of the ground-preparation process. Contractors are currently placing white sand and crushed stone as part of the subsurface works to stabilise the area.

Additionally, a new culvert has been installed at the Washer Pond Road approach at Noitgedacht. Construction of the retaining wall for the main embankment is also progressing, with excavation and geotextile installation already completed and backfilling underway to prepare for final surfacing.

According to the Ministry of Public Works, the project remains on schedule

to become fully operational by June 2026, once the connector roads are completed.

The ministry noted that the project forms part of the government’s broader infrastructural expansion programme aimed at improving connectivity and mobility across Region 10 and the wider country.

“The Ministry of Public Works remains committed to delivering high-quality infrastructure that meets the growing demands of Region 10 and the wider country,” the release stated, while thanking residents of Linden and commuters for their continued patience and co-operation during execution of the works.

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Energy resources will power Guyana's next wave of industrial growth – Ali

GUYANA is preparing to usher in a new phase of development, as President Dr. Irfaan Ali recently emphasised plans to utilise the nation's energy resources to expand non-oil industries and areas, ranging from bauxite, manufacturing to information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure.

The President made those remarks in a video posted on his Facebook page, where he spoke about discussions to deepen co-operation with the United States (US), following a meeting with U.S Secretary of Energy, Chris Wright.

President Ali, in the video, said: "Guyana has tremendous opportunities ahead of us in which we could utilise energy to add value in our natural resources, whether it's bauxite, building out our capacity capability for fertiliser to support the rest of the region, data centres and other investments in manufacturing, industrial development, LNG plant and be that first mover in terms of the infrastructure that will be able to accommodate gas from other partners within the region."

Last week, the first pipe rack for the Gas-to-Energy (GtE) Project arrived in Guyana, marking another key milestone in the ongoing development of the landmark energy initiative at Wales, West Bank Demerara.

It was the President who made the announcement in a post on his official Facebook page, noting that the arrival of the structure represents continued progress in the construction of the integrated energy facility.

According to the President, the pipe rack will support the network of pipelines that will transport natural gas from the offshore pipeline system to the Natural Gas Liquids (NGL) plant and the power generation facility currently under construction at Wales.

The infrastructure forms a critical component of the broader project, which aims to utilise natural gas produced offshore to generate electricity and produce natural gas liquids.

Five firms have already been pre-qualified under a second Request for Proposals (RFPs) for another 300 megawatts (MW) plant, with bids expected by the end of March.

Part of the first phase of the Wales project will be operational by the end of this year, which will see 228 MW of



President Irfaan Ali

power being delivered. By mid-2027, the entire project should be completed.

With plans for natural gas-fired plants totalling up to 600 megawatts under phased development and the commissioning of the first 300-megawatt plant anticipated this year, the strategy is to reduce emissions from the power sector, while lowering electricity costs for consumers and improving reliability across industries and communities.

The GtE, a vital piece of Guyana's development, is progressing well and is closer to fruition. It represents Guyana's determination to use its natural resources to lower costs, expand industries and create new opportunities for citizens.

With over two-thirds of the work already done and strong collaboration among the government, ExxonMobil Guyana and contractors, the project is moving steadily towards completion.

The benefits of the GtE project extend beyond power, as it also has the opportunity to produce local fertiliser,

which could reduce reliance on imports and save foreign currency.

The 1,400-acre Wales Development Zone is being developed around the core infrastructure of the GtE plant, positioning it as the centrepiece of Guyana's emerging industrial landscape.

The President has repeatedly emphasised that the GtE project is not just about a pipeline and power generation, but about building the foundation for a diversified, production-driven economy.

Further, plans are advancing for a large-scale data centre at Wales, aimed at positioning Guyana as a regional technology hub. The initiative will address issues such as data sovereignty and computing capacity, while driving innovation and artificial intelligence development.

Notably, President Ali has constantly underscored that the development agenda includes using energy from Guyana's rapidly expanding oil and gas sector to power non-oil industries.

Bauxite, one of Guyana's long-

standing mineral exports, as one of the industries that will be built out is crucial as the sector was crippled under the previous government, with operations in the Berbice River area previously being inactive for nearly six years.

Guyana's bauxite sector is poised for a significant revival, following the previous announcement by the government of restarting operations in the Berbice River area.

Just recently, it was also announced that Guyana's second gas pipeline will land at the mouth of the Berbice River in Region Six, a move set to trigger a new wave of industrial activity.

The project is expected to support bauxite processing, agro-processing and fertiliser production, creating significant employment opportunities for the surrounding communities.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Economic diversification is a key element of sustainable development, in which a country transitions to a more diverse production and trade structure and this is to decrease vulnerability to external shocks which can undermine prospects for longer-term economic growth.

Diversification helps to manage volatility and provide a more stable path for equitable growth and development, and this strategy has been rolled out by the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) under President Ali's leadership.

Successful economic diversification strategies require a comprehensive set of policy measures focused on improving productivity across various sectors. Under President Ali, his government has unveiled a development agenda, which features emphasis on infrastructure, innovation, enhancing human capital, and creating a favourable business environment to stimulate private sector growth.

In 2025, Guyana's non-oil economy grew by 14.3 per cent, marking a notable improvement from the 13.1 per cent recorded in 2024. Notably, in 2025, the economy recorded double-digit growth for the sixth consecutive year.

Further, Guyana continues to attract global confidence and investment as the country's economy expands under the PPP/C Government's pro-investment policies.



Samson celebrates with Indian coach Gautam Gambhir after the World Cup win

The nearly-forgotten cricketer who became India's T20 World Cup hero

Sanju Samson scripted the most important chapter of his scarcely believable career when India took on New Zealand in the T20 World Cup final in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

In a World Cup where he was not expected to get many chances, Samson finished as the most valuable player of the tournament after India emphatically beat New Zealand by 96 runs to defend their title.

But Samson was not Player of the Match despite scoring 89. That award was given to fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah. Only days ago, during the semifinal against England, it was Samson who took the award, for an identical score, and at the time he was emphatic that Bumrah should have received the honour.

"All credit goes to Bumrah," Samson said after picking up his award in the semi-final. "This should go to him, actually. If he didn't bowl that way in the death overs, I would not be standing here."

This was not just false modesty, it was a mature batter realising that his place in the larger scheme of things had been made so much easier by an ace teammate.

The finer point, though, is that India may not have made it to the knockouts in the first place had it not been for Samson's mature innings.

India's final match of the Super Eights against a strong West Indian team in Kolkata was a virtual quarterfinal.

With an unbeaten 97, Samson laid down the marker. This was an old style innings, not a muscular modern marvel. Samson has the most conventional of set ups, does not move around too much in the crease and every stroke he plays, no matter how far the ball goes, is instantly recognisable as a "cricket shot" by the purists.

Samson's batting is built on precise footwork, balance at the crease and timing. As a wicket-keeper batter, Samson has had to train as hard as anyone else in the team because of the workload he carries.

He is as fit as anyone else, but his strength is rooted in his humble nature rather than the Insta-

gram-worthy six-pack abs sculpted to perfection that most youngsters today seem to aspire to.

But Samson is no youngster.

At 31, Samson has seen a lot of life. When he first played for India, back in 2015, Samson was still a teenager. He was then a product of the Indian Premier League (IPL), having been the bulwark around which the Rajasthan Royals team had been built for years.

If it was the IPL that brought Samson's gifts into focus, it was the domestic Ranji trophy and other similarly unglamorous tournaments that had been the making of the man.

He toiled hard for years, in empty stadiums and in domestic tournaments that don't draw much attention.

Sunday was the culmination of all the hard work he put in and the patience he showed in the past decade.

For an extended period, in which Samson got his chances in the top of the order in T20 cricket for India, his IPL success did not translate into international runs.

In his first 23 innings, he had only one half-century to his name. But Samson continued to trust his method and stayed true to his process even when the results were not coming.

Samson is not the kind of batter who would consistently chip in with middling scores. He's not what you would call safe, in that sense. But when he is good, he is devastating.

This makes his tally of 321 runs at a strike rate of more than 199 in this World Cup staggering.

Samson had played himself out of the playing 11 with poor returns in India's bilateral engagements leading into this World Cup. He was brought in to open the innings to reduce pressure on Abhishek Sharma who was struggling for runs at the top of the order.

If Rinku Singh did not have to leave the team to attend to his ailing father, Samson may not have got that extra chance. Twenty20 cricket is a game of small margins, but it's also one in which you need a sliver of luck to thrive.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Those changes you have been thinking of making on the home front will be so much easier now that Jupiter is moving in your favor again. Once loved ones see the upside of what you are trying to do they will support you 100 per cent.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Get out into the world and have a good time. Cosmic activity in the most sociable area of your chart means you will find like-minded people no matter where you go or what you do — the kind of people who make you glad to be alive.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): If you feel like splashing out today then do so, but don't spend so much money that you have to make painful savings towards the end of the week. A little of what you fancy, at a decent price, will do you a lot of good.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): Any lingering doubts you may have about your next big project will be swept away in a deluge of optimism today. You know what you are capable of and you know that success is just a matter of applying yourself with total self-belief.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Stop what you are doing and take a long hard look at your most cherished ambitions. According to the planets you have been aiming way too low of late and now you must raise your sights, raise your game and raise some hell as well.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): You will draw closer to someone whose outlook on life mirrors your own over the next few days and together you can make some seriously good changes. Don't listen to those who say you are being too idealistic — their cynicism is not for you.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): There is a toughness about the Libra nature that you usually manage to keep hidden but over the next 24 hours others will get a glimpse of just how resolute you can be. Keep pushing at a career door until it bursts wide open.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): You need to be more outspoken when it comes to expressing your beliefs. It's more than likely that you will upset those who don't want to question their own way of looking at the world but in the long-term you will be doing them a favor.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): Anything to do with money and business should go well for you over the next few days but you will need to consciously resist the urge to get carried away. The stars may be in your favor but you cannot afford to take foolish risks.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): If you let partners and colleagues have the final word today you will benefit in ways that may not have occurred to you. The fact is they can see things from a wider perspective, so the choices they make will be good for you as well.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): It's time to stop day-dreaming and to actually knuckle down to some serious work. Those big plans you have may be comforting but they will come to nothing unless you start pushing yourself, physically and mentally, on a daily basis.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): Creative activities are under excellent stars now that Jupiter is on your side again, so decide what it is you want to accomplish then go for it with every ounce of energy you possess. The more others urge caution the more you should ignore them.

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Trinidad defence minister urges US to provide security assets

Trinidad and Tobago's Defence Minister Wayne Sturge has called on the United States to provide additional military assets to help the country confront drug cartels, warning that the nation's borders are "critically exposed."

Speaking on the weekend at the Americas Counter Cartel Conference in Florida, Sturge said Trinidad and Tobago is directly confronting narco-trafficking networks operating across the Caribbean and needs greater support to disrupt them.

"We are not observers in this fight. We are on the frontline with you," Sturge said during the conference hosted by US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth at United States Southern Command in Miami.

Sturge said Trinidad and Tobago's geographic position — once seen as an advantage linking South America and the Caribbean — has increasingly made it vulnerable to drug trafficking, firearms smuggling and human trafficking networks.

"For many years Trinidad and Tobago's geopolitical position was a blessing as a gateway connecting South America to the Caribbean and beyond. But that blessing has become a burden," he said.

The defence minister noted that while Trinidad and Tobago has highly trained security personnel and remains committed to confronting organised crime, economic constraints have limited its ability to maintain strong border security.

"If we are to deliver effectively as the security anchor in the southern

Caribbean, we require assets that would equip us with the capability to disrupt the cartels in the transshipment corridors," he said.

Sturge did not specify what equipment or resources the government is seeking, but said enhanced maritime surveillance and operational capabilities would help authorities intercept drug shipments moving north toward the United States.

The conference took place ahead of the Shield of the Americas Summit, hosted by US President Donald Trump, which will bring together several regional leaders, including Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar and Guyanese President Irfaan Ali.

During the meeting, participating countries signed a joint security declaration aimed at strengthening coordinated maritime and aerial patrols across the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific.

US officials also signalled a more aggressive stance against drug cartels. Hegseth urged regional partners to intensify their efforts against criminal networks, warning that Washington could act independently if necessary to protect US border security.

Meanwhile, the proposal for deeper security cooperation has drawn mixed reactions in Trinidad and Tobago.

Chairman of the opposition People's National Movement, Marvin Gonzales, called for greater transparency regarding any new arrangements with the United States, saying the public should understand how such partner-



Trinidad's Defence Minister Wayne Sturge

ships could affect national sovereignty.

Former police commissioner Gary Griffith, however, said it would be unrealistic for governments to disclose every detail of security agreements, noting that similar cooperation with US agencies has occurred in the past.

Sturge said Trinidad and Tobago

remains committed to working with Washington to combat organised crime, noting that thousands of citizens have been killed in violence linked to narco-trafficking networks over the past two decades. "Every shipment intercepted in our waters is one that would never reach your streets," he said.

UK to require visas for St. Lucia nationals visiting Britain

Nationals of St. Lucia will soon need a visa to visit the United Kingdom following new immigration measures announced by the British government.

Under the changes published by the Government of the United Kingdom on March 5, citizens of both Saint Lucia and Nicaragua will now be required to apply for and obtain a visit visa before travelling to the UK. The move also removes both countries from the list of nationalities eligible to apply for the UK's Electronic Travel Authorisation.

British officials say the new requirement will allow travellers to be assessed against the UK's immigration rules before arrival, enabling authorities to refuse entry in advance where applicants do not meet the criteria.

The decision comes amid concerns about asylum claims made by visitors entering the UK. According to the British government, between January

2022 and December 2025, 360 nationals of Saint Lucia claimed asylum in the UK, with 128 claims — or 36 percent — made at ports of entry.

Officials described this as a high number of claims relative to Saint Lucia's population of about 180,000 people. As of December 2025, 222 Saint Lucian nationals were receiving asylum support in the UK, including 213 who were housed in accommodation provided by the UK Home Office.

The British government said asylum applications place additional strain on border operations and the wider migration system.

The new policy also reflects concerns about Saint Lucia's Citizenship by Investment Programme, which allows foreign investors to obtain citizenship in exchange for economic contributions.

British authorities noted that while they recognise steps taken by the Saint

Lucian government in the past year to reduce risks associated with the programme, they believe "unsustainable risks" remain. The government said

these concerns stem largely from the historic sale of large numbers of citizenships and passports.



Jamaica PM Holness to receive Legacy Award at AFUWI Gala in New York

The American Foundation for The University of the West Indies (AFUWI) will honor the Most Hon. Dr. Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica, with the Legacy Award—one of the organization’s highest honors—at its 29th Annual “The Legacy Continues” Awards Gala on Friday, April 17, 2026, at 538 Park Avenue at 63rd Street in New York City. The event will start at 6:00 PM.

The annual gala unites leaders from business, academia, public service, and philanthropy to support scholarships that increase access to higher education for outstanding Caribbean students at The University of the West Indies (UWI). Proceeds from the event fund AFUWI scholarships, helping talented students from across the Caribbean turn academic potential into university degrees and, ultimately, into productivity and development.

Prime Minister Holness is being recognized for his leadership and ongoing commitment to education, economic resilience, and regional collaboration as fundamental pillars of Jamaica’s national development. His recognition reflects AFUWI’s tradition of honoring leaders whose work significantly advances the Caribbean and its global diaspora.

“The Legacy Continues Gala celebrates leaders whose vision and service help shape the future of our community and region,” said Dr. Cyrus McCalla, Chairman of AFUWI. “Through their leadership—and the generosity of those who support this event—we can open doors of opportunity for talented but financially disadvantaged Caribbean students whose aspirations for higher education deserve every chance to flourish.”

The evening will honor a distinguished group of leaders whose accomplishments and service to community and country serve as a strong example for the next generation—especially the students of The University of the West Indies—highlighting the transformative power of education and leadership. Each honoree embodies the core principle AFUWI represents: that when talent is supported by opportunity, the impact can change communities, nations, and even generations.

Anthony and Gregory Belinfanti, a father-and-son duo, will receive the Pathfinder Award for Generational Impact in Education, acknowledging their combined dedication to enhancing educational opportunities across generations. Anthony is a retired educator, while Gregory Belinfanti is the president of One Equity Partners, a middle-market private equity firm.

The Pelican Award—a UWI alumni peer award—will be presented



Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness

to Dr. Kevon Rhiney, PhD, whose scholarship and leadership exemplify the transformative power of Caribbean higher education.

Two distinguished leaders in academic medicine and institutional governance will also be honored. Dr. Wayne A. I. Frederick, president of Howard University, will receive the Caribbean Luminary Award, recognizing his notable career and visionary leadership in higher education and healthcare. Dr. Wayne J. Riley, president of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, will be awarded the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Institutional Impact, applauding his exceptional contributions to academic medicine and institutional development.

Camille Joseph-Goldman, Group Vice President at Charter Communications, will receive the Vice Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Public Service and Community Impact, recognizing her commitment to strengthening communities and expanding opportunities.

Looking toward global leadership

and innovation, Jacky Wright—recipient of honorary doctorates from the University of Bath and Aston University—will receive the Phoenix Award for Global Digital Leadership in recognition of her influential work in global technology transformation.

The distinguished Honoree Class of 2026 also includes Dr. A. Norman

Sabga, LLD (Hon.) UWI, Executive Chairman of the ANSA McAL Group of Companies from the twin-island republic of Trinidad and Tobago. He will receive the Chancellor’s and Corporate Awards for Excellence in Global Business Leadership, recognizing his visionary leadership and the value-driven enterprise he has built.

Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana join US-led Americas Counter-Cartel Coalition

Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana have joined a newly established regional military alliance known as the Americas Counter-Cartel Coalition, aimed at intensifying the fight against drug trafficking networks and transnational organised crime across the hemisphere.

The two Caribbean nations signed onto the initiative after United States President Donald Trump endorsed the Doral Charter during the Shield of the Americas summit in Doral.

Addressing invited regional leaders at the summit, Trump said the coalition would rely on decisive military action to dismantle criminal networks.

“The heart of our agreement is a commitment to using lethal military force to destroy the sinister cartels and terrorist networks once and for all. We’ll get rid of them. We need your help,” Trump told attendees.

He added that partner countries would play a key role in identifying cartel operations.

“You have to just tell us where they are. We have amazing weaponry, as you probably noticed over the last short period of time,” he said.

During the signing ceremony, Trinidad and Tobago’s Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar stood to Trump’s right and was presented with the pen used to sign the agreement — a symbolic gesture that drew visible appreciation from the Trinidadian leader.

Persad-Bissessar has remained supportive of an expanding United States military presence in the Caribbean and wider regional efforts to combat drug cartels.

Trump told participating leaders that organised crime has taken a heavy toll across the region but insisted that coordinated action could reverse the trend.

“I saw it so badly, how you’re suffering with what’s happening with the crime in the region,” he said. “And I said, if we ever come back, we’re going to eradicate that crime, and I’m going to work with you, and if you want, we’re going to do it, we can do it pretty easily.”

Other countries present at the summit included Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Panama, Honduras, El Salvador, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Chile, Bolivia and Argentina.

Trump said the region had vast po-



Trump with Latin American leaders at the Summit

tential but warned that criminal groups were holding countries back.

“The nations gathered here today are filled with unlimited potential,” he said. “But to fulfil that tremendous potential, we must smash the grip of the cartels and criminal gangs and horrible organisations run by, in some cases, absolute animals.”

Meanwhile, Guyana reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening regional security co-operation during the inaugural Americas Counter-Cartel Conference held at the United States Southern Command headquarters in Florida.

Speaking at the meeting, Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret’d) Mark

Phillips said Guyana intends to play an active role in joint operations aimed at disrupting narcotics trafficking, narco-terrorism and other transnational criminal activity.

“Guyana and the United States share a strong and expanded strategic partnership built on mutual trust and robust defence and security co-operation,” Phillips said, pointing to ongoing collaboration through joint exercises, capacity building and policy engagement.

He warned that the growing reach of criminal cartels and gangs presents a serious threat to regional stability.

“These networks undermine the

rule of law, weaken institutions and threaten the safety and economic well-being of our citizens,” Phillips said. “For countries like Guyana, located along important maritime and regional transit corridors, addressing narco-trafficking and narco-terrorism requires strong co-operation among our nations.”

Phillips added that the evolving nature of organised crime makes intelligence sharing, operational coordination and stronger defence capabilities increasingly necessary across the hemisphere, while stressing that all efforts must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of participating states.

St. Vincent PM and NDP mark first 100 days in office

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister Godwin Friday described his administration's first 100 days as "a wonderful experience," emphasizing steps taken to ease the cost-of-living crisis and deliver on campaign promises. Speaking on Hot 97 FM, Friday highlighted the NDP government's commitment to both immediate relief measures and long-term policies to strengthen the economy.

Friday's government, which swept the Unity Labour Party 14-1 in the Nov. 27, 2025 general election, focused on reinstating public sector workers fired under the previous administration's COVID-19 vaccine mandate. "We have also honoured our campaign... that the persons who were fired under the vaccine mandate, that they would be reinstated," Friday said, adding that the government is working closely with unions to ensure a smooth and respectful process for returning employees.

The administration also implemented a successful VAT-free shopping day on Dec. 19, designed to put money back in consumers' pockets and stimulate local businesses. Looking ahead, Friday confirmed plans to reduce VAT from 16% to 13% later in the year, saying, "This is not an election gimmick. It's part of our strategy... Just watch me. You'll see what I do. So we'll deliver."

Other measures included increasing public assistance to EC\$500 per month, exceeding the previous government's proposed EC\$360, and paying a tax-free bonus package totaling EC\$22 million to approximately 12,000 public servants, pensioners, and daily/part-time workers. Friday described the bonus as a "serious measure to ease the



Godwin Friday being sworn in 100 days ago

cost-of-living burdens" and a demonstration of the government's commitment to supporting lower-income citizens.

Highlighting the government's broader economic approach, Friday said Budget 2026 emphasizes opportunities for entrepreneurship and job creation. "The way in which you help people in the country most is by creat-

ing an economy that provides opportunity for people, that provides jobs, that provides business opportunity... Don't be shy to come and tell [government offices], 'Do your work. Here's the thing I want to get done,'" he said.

Friday acknowledged the challenging fiscal situation inherited from the previous administration, with public debt at EC\$3.5 billion or 110.3% of

GDP, but said the NDP is focused on delivering tangible benefits to citizens while planning for longer-term development. "People are seeing it in their lives every day," he said, noting ongoing infrastructure projects and social programs as part of a broader strategy for economic growth and social welfare.

Jamaica defends decision to end Cuban medical program

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade says Jamaica's decision to end its technical cooperation programme with Cuba in the health sector followed a review that identified legal and labour concerns, despite the country's appreciation for the work of Cuban medical professionals.

The Jamaica government says its decision to end technical cooperation in health with Cuba was based on legal and labour concerns, responding to claims from Havana that the move was made under pressure from the United States.

In a media release issued Saturday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade said the government conducted a review of the programme to ensure compliance with Jamaican law and international labour conventions, ultimately concluding that the existing arrangement could not continue.

The statement followed criticism from Cuba's foreign ministry, which said Jamaica had "yielded to the pressures of the government of the United States."

"With this action, the government of Jamaica yields to the pressures of the government of the United States, which is not concerned about the health needs of the Caribbean brothers," the Cuban ministry said in a statement Friday. Cuba also expressed regret over the end of the long-standing programme and said the decision would affect healthcare services previously provided by its personnel.

In its response, Jamaica emphasized that it values the contribution of Cuban medical professionals who have worked in the island's public health system.

"Jamaica has always valued the contribution of the Cuban medical professionals who have served our people

with dedication, skill and compassion. Cuban nurses, doctors and technicians from the neighbouring island are treated by the Government of Jamaica with respect, care and appreciation," the statement said.

The ministry noted that the United States has publicly raised concerns about the operation of the programme globally, including issues related to denial of access to travel documents, restricted freedom of movement and salary payment arrangements. As a result, Jamaica conducted a review to ensure compliance with domestic and international legal obligations.

According to the ministry, the review found no problems related to working conditions in Jamaica.

"Following the review, it was confirmed that there were no issues with treatment on the job, accommodation, leave entitlements or freedom of movement in Jamaica. It however revealed

two issues which required immediate attention," the statement said.

One concern involved Cuban medical personnel not having possession of their own passports. The ministry said once this was brought to the Government's attention, steps were taken to address it.

"Among the concerns identified was the fact that Cuban personnel were not in possession of their own passports. Once that was brought to the Government's attention, immediate steps were taken to correct it."

A second issue related to the structure of salary payments for Cuban medical workers. The ministry said salaries were calculated at the same level as Jamaican counterparts but were paid by Jamaica to Cuban authorities in U.S. dollars, with only overtime payments made directly to the personnel.

Cuba ends medical brigade programme in Guyana after 5 decades

The Guyana government said Monday that Cuba has withdrawn its long-standing medical brigade programme from Guyana, ending an arrangement that had lasted for more than 48 years.

Health Minister Frank Anthony said the decision to terminate the programme was taken by Havana in February 2026 while talks between the two countries were ongoing.

“We have been engaging the Cuban authorities and they chose to terminate or withdraw the Cuban doctors who were here,” Anthony said in an interview.

The minister said that following the decision, the Guyanese government opted to hire Cuban medical personnel directly to continue supporting the country’s public health system.

“Cuban doctors, nurses and technicians, if they want to come to Guyana, they can come to Guyana and once they are properly qualified and certified by our medical authorities here — medical council, nursing council and so forth — once they meet those requirements, then we will be able to offer them a job,” Anthony said.

He added that several Cuban medical professionals have already accepted employment under the new arrangement, including some who were previously part of the brigade and chose to remain in the country.

However, Anthony said he was unable to provide the exact number of Cuban medical personnel currently employed directly by the government.

The health minister also dismissed concerns that the withdrawal of the brigade would negatively affect Guyana’s healthcare services. He said



Cuban medical brigade

the government has been expanding local training programmes for nurses and other healthcare professionals as part of a broader effort to strengthen the health system.

“As you know, we have been expanding our healthcare system and we have also started to expand training,” Anthony said.

He noted that the government launched a registered nursing programme three years ago and expects to graduate nearly 800 nurses by June this year.

Anthony’s comments come days after a small group of citizens wrote to President Irfaan Ali urging the government to reverse the decision and restore

the Cuban Medical Brigade.

The development has also fueled speculation that Guyana may have ended the programme under pressure from the United States, which has increased criticism of Cuba’s overseas medical missions.

Washington has alleged that the programme, which has provided medical personnel to several Caribbean and developing countries, relies on coercive labour practices. U.S. officials have claimed that Cuban medical workers face withheld wages, confiscated passports, restrictions on movement and pressure from authorities while serving abroad.

The United States has also argued

that the programme allows the Cuban government to profit from the work of its medical professionals by retaining a significant portion of their earnings.

In 2025, Washington threatened to restrict or revoke visas for some officials in African, Caribbean and Brazilian countries it said were linked to the Cuban medical programme.

Guyana and Cuba have maintained close diplomatic ties for decades. In 2021, more than 60 Cuban doctors travelled to Guyana to assist with the treatment of patients during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cuba has also played a key role in training Guyanese doctors and other healthcare professionals over the years.



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Sir Clive Lloyd voices concern for West Indies players stranded in India

Former West Indies captain Clive Lloyd has expressed deep concern for members of the regional cricket team who have been stranded in India for over a week following their elimination from the ICC Men's T20 World Cup on March 1.

The team's scheduled departure was delayed due to ongoing airspace restrictions across West Asia, a disruption affecting international flights throughout the region. Reports indicate that the West Indies, along with South Africa, are now slated to depart early Tuesday, following England's team leaving Mumbai on Saturday evening for London, according to ESPNcricinfo.

Speaking on i95.5 FM, Lloyd described the situation as "frightening" for the players, emphasizing the importance of ensuring their safety and swift return to their families.

"Well, I presume that they should be dealing with the people that invited them there and find out the best way to get home, because you don't want to be in harm's way, you want to get home to your family as quickly as possible," Lloyd said.

Highlighting the personal stakes, he noted, "Most of the guys are married, have kids, and so on, so they would be worried. They don't want to have that situation."

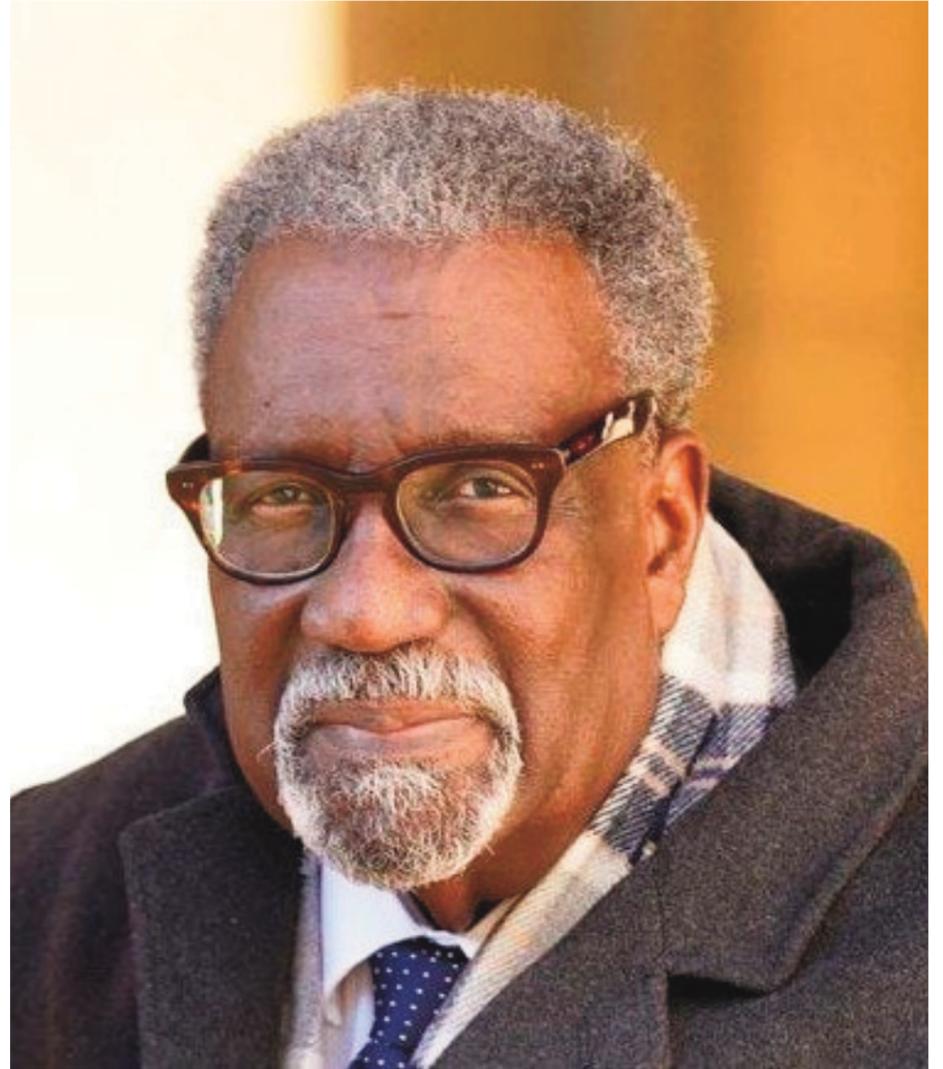
While acknowledging that the International Cricket Council is responsible for coordinating team logistics, Lloyd suggested that regional governments may need to step in if progress is slow.

"It is a bad look for the West Indies, because if everybody is going home and you're the only team left there, you would think that something is wrong. Is it that they're short of cash? It means that the governments should get involved and get people home," he said.

Lloyd also recommended that charter flights could provide a direct solution to ensure the players' safety and expedite their return. "Surely they should be able to charter a flight and get the players home. You have to look after your players; safety is important," he added.

The delay has underscored the vulnerability of athletes during geopolitical crises, placing West Indies players in an uncomfortable limbo while other teams have successfully departed. Lloyd's call for immediate action reflects the wider expectation that players' welfare must remain the priority, and that no team should be left stranded in uncertain conditions.

As the situation develops, the cricketing community and regional authorities will be closely monitoring efforts to repatriate the team safely.



Sir Clive Lloyd

Holder earns lone Windies spot in T20 World Cup team

All-rounder Jason Holder has emerged as the lone representative from the West Indies in the International Cricket Council Team of the Tournament for the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

The experienced Barbadian earned the recognition after producing a series of influential performances throughout the competition, showcasing his value as both a wicket-taking bowler and a dependable lower-order batter.

The tournament concluded on Sunday in Dubai, where India national cricket team secured their second consecutive T20 World Cup title with a commanding 96-run victory over New Zealand national cricket team in the final.

Holder's selection reflects his steady contributions across the seven matches he played during the tournament.

The 34-year-old captured 10 wickets at an economy rate of 8.87, with his standout bowling performance coming against Nepal national cricket team in the preliminary round, where he produced figures of 4-27.

With the bat, Holder also proved valuable in pressure situations, scoring 141 runs at an average of 35.25 while often batting in the lower middle order.

Among Holder's highlights was a remarkable counterattack during a dra-

matic clash with South Africa national cricket team.

Holder blasted 49 from just 31 deliveries while sharing a record eighth-wicket stand of 89 runs with Romario Shepherd, the highest partnership for the eighth wicket in the history of the Men's T20 World Cup.

The partnership stood out as one of the tournament's most memorable moments, illustrating Holder's ability to influence games even in difficult circumstances.

The ICC's Team of the Tournament features players from several leading cricket nations, including four representatives from tournament champions India.

South African skipper Aiden Markram was named captain of the side, reflecting his leadership and performances throughout the competition.

Holder's inclusion ensures the West Indies remain represented among the tournament's standout performers despite their absence from the latter stages.

Aiden Markram (captain), Sanju Samson, Sahibzada Farhan, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya, Will Jacks, Jason Holder, Jasprit Bumrah, Lungi Ngidi, Adil Rashid, Blessing Muzarabani.

12th man: Shadley Van Schalkwyk.



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Guyana-born cricket umpire to represent Canada in WICUA Exchange Programme

GUYANA-BORN umpire, Daniel Singh, who now resides in Canada, is the latest candidate who will soon be participating in the revived and much vaunted West Indies Cricket Umpires Association (WICUA) Exchange Programme.

Singh's participation was approved by the Executive Committee of the Canada Cricket Umpires

Association (CCUA) and he will be officiating in matches in his home country during the period March 26 to April 8.

A fully qualified WICUA umpire as of 2011, while living in the British Virgin Islands, Singh has also completed the Level Three Cricket Canada examinations, since migrating to North America in 2021.

Since then, he has been an active member of the CCUA, as well as the Toronto Cricket Umpires and Scorers Association (TSCUA).

President of the CCUA, Azad Khan, who is also Secretary of the WICUA, made the announcement about Singh's participation at the recently held awards ceremony hosted by the CCUA.

Speaking at the ceremony, Khan extended unreserved congratulations to Singh and wished him well during the upcoming assignment in Guyana.

"I was happy to be one of the first persons who interacted with Singh since he came to Canada and welcomed him to the membership of the CCUA," Khan pointed out. "I am confident that he will bring great respect to our association as he represents us in Guyana while officiating in matches there."

One of the objectives of the CCUA is to develop, build upon and maintain close collaborative working relationships with cricket governing bodies and



President of the Scarborough Cricket Association, Shiv Persaud (left), with cricket umpire Daniel Singh

other umpire and scorer associations, both within Canada and overseas.

"So, as an Executive Committee, we are pleased that Singh has accepted the challenge and opportunity to help fulfill this mission, as he will be our first representative to participate in the WICUA Exchange Programme," added the CCUA President.

Khan also expressed appreciation to President of the Guyana Cricket Board (GCB), Bissoondyal Singh,

and President of the Guyana Cricket Umpires Council (GCUC), Dawchan Nagasar, for their assistance with supporting the participation of

Singh in the schedule for upcoming matches in Guyana.

President of the WICUA, Vivian Johnson, who also attended the CCUA awards ceremony, congratulated Singh and thanked him for his willingness to be part of the programme. He explained that the WICUA does not have the funds required to cover the full cost of the programme, adding that a significant portion of the expenses is borne by each umpire.

"So this is a significant individual sacrifice and we thank all the umpires who have represented their respective countries as part of the programme thus far," said Johnson.

Prior to migrating, Singh also worked as a journalist at the Guyana National Newspapers Limited (GNNL), publishers of the Guyana Chronicle.

Another CCUA member, Sush Mahalanobis, will also be participating in the programme at a date to be announced, also likely in Guyana.

This Exchange Programme was conceptualised by the WICUA to afford the opportunity for its umpires to visit and officiate in matches in other countries, while also sharing in and experiencing the diverse cultures throughout its member territories.

India make history with record T20 World Cup triumph

India's cricketing narrative reached an unprecedented pinnacle on Sunday as the hosts delivered a masterclass of power, precision, and dominance to capture the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup in front of over 100,000 roaring fans at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

The victory was historic on multiple fronts: India became the first team to successfully defend a T20 World Cup title, the first to win on home soil, and the first to claim a third T20 World Cup crown, all in a performance that left New Zealand reeling.

The backdrop to India's triumph was a sobering defeat at the hands of South Africa in the Super 8 stage last month, which exposed weaknesses and stirred memories of the 2023 ICC Men's ODI World Cup Final, also played at Ahmedabad.

On Sunday, the script initially mirrored that familiar scenario: New Zealand won the toss and sent India in to bat. But from that point, India's response was a complete rewrite of the narrative.

India's top order set the tone with an unrelenting display of power-hitting. Opening with Abhishek Sharma, whose tournament form had been questioned,

and Sanju Samson, India surged to 92 without loss in the powerplay. Sharma raced to a 17-ball fifty, setting a record for the fastest half-century in a T20 World Cup final.

Samson complemented the assault with his third consecutive half-century, and when Ishan Kishan joined the fray, India's scoreboard momentum proved unstoppable. Kishan contributed 54, while Samson smacked Rachin Ravindra for three successive sixes, keeping the run rate sky-high.

New Zealand's Jimmy Neesham briefly stemmed the tide with a dramatic over, claiming three wickets, including Samson, Kishan, and captain Suryakumar Yadav, but Shivam Dube ensured the innings closed with a flourish. The all-rounder smashed an unbeaten 26 off eight balls, including three fours and two sixes in the final over, propelling India to a daunting 255 for 5, the highest total ever in a T20 World Cup final.

Chasing 256, New Zealand struggled under scoreboard pressure. Early wickets of key threats Finn Allen (9) and Glenn Phillips (5) left the visitors reeling. Despite valiant efforts from Tim Seifert (52) and Mitchell Santner (43), the chase never gained traction.

India's bowlers delivered a clinical performance. Jasprit Bumrah led the attack with 4-15, while Axar Patel added 3-27, systematically dismantling the Kiwi batting order. New Zealand were bowled out for 159 in 19 overs, resulting in a 96-run victory, the largest margin ever in a T20 World Cup final.

Sunday's final was more than a win; it was a celebration of Indian cricket's resilience and strategic brilliance. Records tumbled, milestones were achieved, and a previously vulnerable team rewrote its history in a manner befitting a historic home crowd.

From Sharma's record-breaking blitz to Samson's consistency and Bumrah's lethal bowling, India's third T20 World Cup title now stands as one of the most dominant performances in cricketing history.

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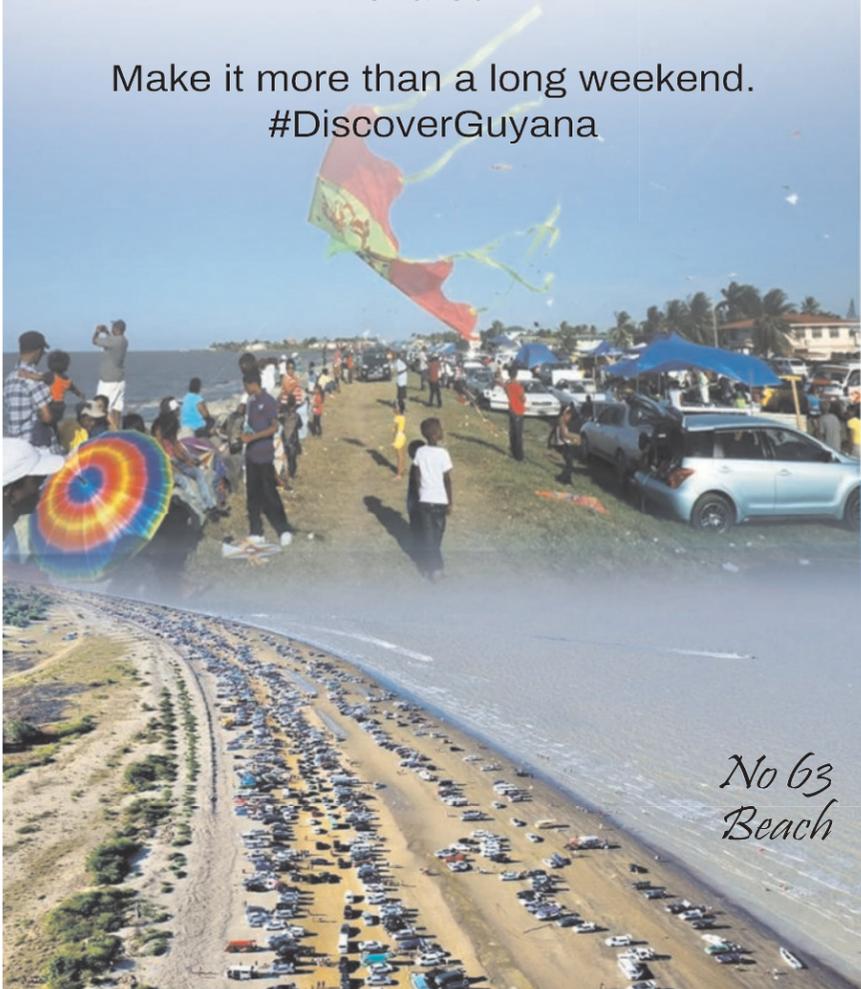


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