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Page One Comment

Guyana at 60

The celebration of Guyana's 60th anniversary of Independence is a time for much jubilation, as well as reflection.

It is also time for us at Equality to continue our commitment to keep vigil over Guyana, as we have done faithfully for almost 50 years.

We at this paper have witnessed the highs and lows of the country as it moved through its development as a new nation, always keeping watch and keeping our readers informed. We understood the need for Guyanese in the Diaspora to know what was happening, whether good or bad. And we were determined to produce informed and balanced reports, so the Diaspora -- and indeed, the world -- would be properly aware of what was happening, as is our duty as one of the premier Guyanese publications being produced outside of the country.

We remain as committed today, almost 50 years later, to this mission as we were from the start.

Today, Guyana has much to celebrate. It is one



AS Guyana commemorates its 60th year of independence, the nation reverberates with the fervour of self-determination, says President Dr Irfaan Ali (above). Today, it stands proudly, charting its course towards prosperity with full autonomy, embracing an inclusive and equitable future.

to watch, as the saying goes, in terms of rising stars in the world. The discovery and exploration of its oil and gas resources have made it possibly the most

rapidly growing economy in the world today, and the globe is paying attention, with countries as diverse as the super powers to African nations all trying to get a piece of the pie by investing in not just the development of the oil and gas resources, but the people of Guyana.

All of this is due to the steady hand on the wheel of state, led by Dr Irfaan Ali and his team, who have made sure that Guyana in the future does not suffer the fate of many nations that have fallen to what is commonly known as the oil curse.

Dr Ali took, and is taking, steps to diversify the economy, to use the wealth the resources are bringing to invest in other areas of economic development, like agriculture and manufacturing, so Guyana will have a strong and certain future not just at 60 years today, but decades into the future.

Continued on Page 6

Guyana through the years in pictures.

See page 31



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Mustapha reinforces gov't commitment to agriculture

Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P., Minister of Agriculture, met with farmers and residents of #10 Village, Mahaica River and Strathavon/Cane Grove area to reinforce the government's unwavering commitment to the agricultural sector, especially the rice farmers.

During the community meeting, Minister Mustapha outlined strategic investments and ongoing government support tailored for all categories of farmers—from smallholders to large-scale producers.

Emphasizing the future of Guyanese agriculture, the Minister strongly encouraged farmers to embrace diversification and tap into the lucrative market of high-value crops to boost their income and strengthen regional food security.

Ali to public transport: Go easy on commuters

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali is urging public transportation providers and other stakeholders to act responsibly and avoid excessive fare increases as global fuel prices continue to rise due to ongoing instability in the Middle East and disruptions in international transport systems.

In a statement on Tuesday, the president said Guyana, despite being a major crude oil producer, still relies heavily on imported refined fuel products and is therefore affected by rising international energy prices.

He noted, however, that the government has spent hundreds of billions of dollars over the years to shield consumers from the full impact of inflationary pressures stemming from global fuel market fluctuations.

"You would recall that the Government of Guyana removed the excise tax on imported refined products to zero," President Ali stated.

According to the head of state, the removal of the excise tax has resulted in savings of more than \$100 billion annually for consumers, helping to keep fuel prices significantly below increases being experienced globally.

He explained that the policy translated into approximately \$500 in savings on every gallon of diesel or gasoline purchased by consumers.

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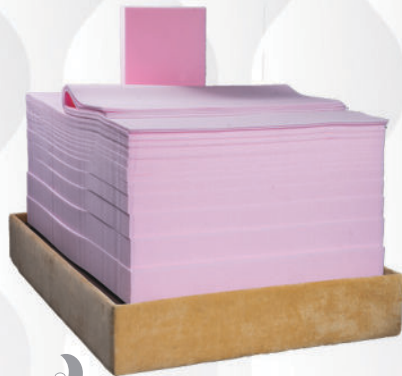
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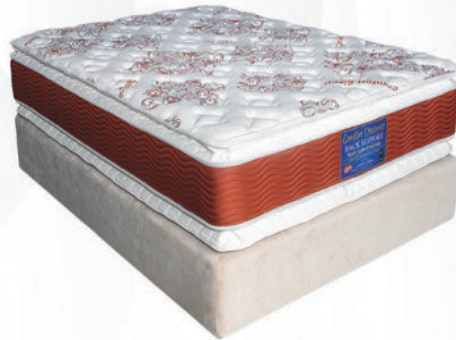
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May this special day be filled with pride, unity, and celebration. Honouring the rich history, vibrant culture, and resilience of the Guyanese community, and wishing you continued prosperity for years to come.



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Guyana airport solar project expected to save US\$800,000 annually

A new three-megawatt grid-tied solar photovoltaic plant slated for installation at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport is expected to save approximately US\$800,000 annually in electricity costs when completed in June 2027.

Chief Executive Officer of the Guyana Energy Agency, Dr. Mahender Sharma, said the facility will generate electricity to offset the airport's day-time energy consumption, while excess power will be exported to the Guyana Power and Light grid.

Sharma told the Department of Public Information on Tuesday that the solar plant is projected to generate approximately 4,544 megawatt-hours of electricity annually, surpassing the airport's current yearly consumption of about 3,637 megawatt-hours.

The project is also expected to support Guyana's transition toward cleaner energy by reducing dependence on fossil fuels and lowering carbon emissions.

Officials said the facility is projected to generate more than 112 million kilowatt-hours of renewable energy over its estimated 25-year lifespan while reducing carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 72,000 metric tonnes.

Preparatory work on the project is already underway. Officials said the site has been cleared and several technical and engineering studies have been completed, including geotechnical investigations, photovoltaic layout



The Guyana Airport will be powered by a 3 megawatt solar plant

design, shadow analysis, earthing studies and lightning protection assessments. Detailed engineering designs have also been finalized, with authorities currently reviewing and approving major components and equipment for

the facility. Major civil works are expected to begin shortly and will include foundation construction, installation of mounting structures, cable trenching, inverter and transformer installation, and works needed to connect the sys-

tem to the Guyana Power and Light network. The next phase of the project will involve the procurement and importation of solar photovoltaic equipment and supporting electrical infrastructure.

Guyana, DR advance talks on energy cooperation

President of Guyana Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali met with President of the Dominican Republic Luis Abinader Corona and a high-level delegation in Georgetown on Thursday as the two countries continue discussions aimed at expanding cooperation in oil, gas and broader energy development.

The meeting at State House also included Samuel Pereyra, along with other officials from the Dominican energy sector.

Talks centered on strengthening collaboration in energy, petrochemicals, agriculture and regional energy security, with both governments reviewing opportunities for joint investment in Guyana's expanding oil and gas industry.

Officials said the latest engagement builds on discussions initiated in 2023, when both countries first identified strategic areas for cooperation, including energy infrastructure and supply security across the Caribbean.

Among the areas under review are potential investment interests linked to the Berbice Block—previously held by On Energy—as well as broader cooperation in refinery development, petrochemical production and regional fuel supply stability.

President of Guyana Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali said the talks continue work begun two years ago, with a focus on building long-term energy resilience.

“At that time we spoke of the establishment of a refinery, and we



President Dr Irfaan Ali with DR President Luis Abinader Corona

would love to continue the discussions and see how we can arrive at a model that can build energy and supply security for Guyana and the rest of the region,” President Ali said.

He also pointed to Guyana's Gas-to-Energy project at Wales as another key opportunity for collaboration between private-sector entities in both countries.

The two sides further noted growing partnerships between companies in Guyana and the Dominican Republic in agriculture, energy and petrochemi-

cals, with several consortia already taking shape.

At the conclusion of the meeting, officials said they were satisfied with progress made since the 2023 agreements and reaffirmed their commitment to deepening economic ties.

President Ali described the engagement as “a very historic day,” saying it marked an important step toward strengthening regional energy security and expanding economic opportunities across the Caribbean.

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Guyana at 60

From Page One

He has also kept a strong focus on the environment, understanding that the country is one of the stewards of the lungs of the world. He has committed Guyana to the Low Carbon Credit strategy, which ties the fight against climate change to developer investment.

Guyana is the first country in the world to take such a step, and it is commendable that it has. This means, in layman terms, that any investment into the oil and gas industry must also financially invest to counter the impact of such industry on the Guyana Amazon, as well as its impact on indigenous community development and climate resilience.

President Ali also remains laser focused on Guyana's diversity to ensure that all the people of the country feel included, creating the One Guyana strategy to make sure everyone has a seat at the table

in all development plans going forward.

Reflecting on the country's diversity, President Ali -- in a message issued to mark Indian Arrival Day on May 5 -- said Guyana's enduring challenge has been forging unity from its many cultural strands.

He pointed to the government's "One Guyana" vision as the pathway to building a society where all citizens feel valued and included.

The President also underscored the importance of ensuring that the country's growing wealth, from oil and gas to agriculture and natural resources, benefits every Guyanese.

President Ali also called for a renewed commitment to building a nation where every citizen has the opportunity to thrive, as the nation moves to celebrate its Diamond Jubilee.

"Let us move forward together: united, determined, and committed to a future where everyone

belongs," he said.

He said a future of shared prosperity where no one is left behind, but has a place at a shared table, is what guides his vision for the future.

And given what he and his team in government have already done, we have no doubt that Guyana is in good hands for the future -- who knows, maybe for another 60 years.

We'll not use this space to talk about the challenges Guyana has faced to get where it is. Our readers already know of these, as such stories have been detailed in the pages of Equality over our last almost 50 years in business.

Now is the time to celebrate. Let's leave the past in the past, and look forward to the future.

From where we sit, we can safely say we're in good hands.

Happy Independence, Guyana,

Guyana vs. Trinidad and Tobago: Quite an economic story

By H.E. Sasenarine Singh

AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM AND NETHERLANDS AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

THE contrasting economic performances of Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago over the last decade offer a striking case study in how resource wealth can either catalyse transformation or expose structural stagnation. While both nations are hydrocarbon economies, their current trajectories suggest that natural resources alone do not determine success; policy direction, timing, and adaptability do.

Guyana's economic surge is nothing short of extraordinary. Since its first major offshore oil discovery in the Liza field in May 2015, the country has rapidly repositioned itself as a global growth leader. While annual GDP growth rates have at times exceeded 40 per cent in real terms (the IMF forecast a 33.9 per cent expansion for 2024), the World Bank projects more moderate but still remarkable growth of 19.6 per cent for 2026 and 21.9 per cent for 2027. This reflects a decisive shift from a small, raw-material-based economy to a major oil producer in under a decade. The ambition is ongoing, with President Irfaan Ali now making a renewed push for the establishment of an oil refinery in Guyana, which he has described as a "critical national security priority amid escalating global energy uncertainties and supply chain disruptions".

However, the real argument is not that Guyana is succeeding, but why it is succeeding. The country has aggressively leveraged foreign investment to accelerate productive and infrastructure development. In doing so, it has embraced globalisation rather than resisted it. Critics may warn of overdependence on oil, but such caution often underestimates the strategic value of timing.

Guyana's rapid oil development, projected to make it the world's fourth-largest offshore producer by 2035 according to Rystad Energy, is heavily scrutinised about economic overdependence and resource-curse risks. However, this "oil bonanza" provides critical, time-sensitive capital needed for infrastructure, human capital development, and strengthening regional energy security. The bottom line remains: Guyana is capitalising on its resource window while global demand still supports it. This is the only way; a pragmatic approach.

In contrast, Trinidad and Tobago represents a cautionary tale of what happens when an energy-rich economy fails to evolve. Once one of the most prosperous nations in the Caribbean, its economy has stagnated, with the IMF estimating growth of just 0.8 per cent in 2025 and projecting 0.7 per cent for 2026. The issue is not a lack of resources, but a failure to adapt to changing global dynamics. Declining natural gas output, persistent foreign exchange shortages (described as a key feature of the 2025 economic environment), and limited diversification reflect deeper structural inertia.

The uncomfortable truth is that Trinidad and Tobago's challenges are largely self-inflicted. Years of reliance on hydrocarbon revenues created a level of economic complacency that discouraged diversification and innovation. While policymakers have long discussed economic transformation in key areas such as agriculture, tangible progress has been limited. The result is an economy that is stable but stagnant (arguably a more dangerous position than volatility), because it masks underlying decline.

That said, it would be naïve to view Guyana's rise as an unqualified success. Rapid growth driven by oil carries well-documented risks, including inflation, inequality, and the classic symptoms of Dutch disease. However, the IMF concluded in its 2025 Ar-

ticle IV report that "Guyana does not yet show clear symptoms of Dutch disease", suggesting that the government's focus on fiscal discipline and diversification is bearing fruit. Without careful governance, Guyana could still replicate the pitfalls that now constrain Trinidad and Tobago. The difference is that Guyana is at the beginning of its trajectory, and the statements from key decision makers continue to illustrate that they understand the key challenges and have designed policy measures to mitigate these challenges.

President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali is actively positioning the country as a leader in food, energy, and environmental security to drive economic empowerment, utilising the nation's oil and gas revenue to fuel a sustainable, non-oil economy. His development agenda, often referred to as a "people-centred" approach, aims to transform Guyana's infrastructure, reduce the cost of living, and diversify the economy through technology-driven agricultural and industrial sectors. Meanwhile, Trinidad and Tobago is still grappling with the consequences of past inaction.

Ultimately, the comparison between these two economies underscores a broader argument: resource wealth is not destiny; policy choices are. Guyana's momentum (especially in infrastructure build-out), reflects bold, if risky, decision-making, while Trinidad and Tobago's stagnation highlights the cost of delayed reform. The real question is not whether Guyana will face challenges (it will), but whether it can avoid becoming the next example of missed opportunity. Thus, a total study of how the economy of Trinidad and Tobago was managed over the last 20 years is required for academics at the University of Guyana and key policymakers in both the public and private sectors. The sooner, the better.



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Ontario moves to strengthen safeguards for adopted children

By Milan Maharaj

LJI REPORTER

The Ontario government is proposing legislative changes made for strengthening oversight of adoptions, saying the changes are intended to improve safeguards for adopted children and increase accountability across the adoption system.

The proposed amendments, announced by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, would update Ontario's adoption system by increasing oversight of adoption practitioners, improving transparency, and expanding protections for children and families involved in the process. The province says the changes are meant to ensure the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children placed through private domestic and international adoptions.

The government mentions that the proposed legislation would give authorities stronger powers to investigate misconduct and respond to concerns involving licensed adoption agencies and practitioners. Officials say the changes would also improve information sharing and strengthen compliance measures in situations where adoption laws or regulations may have been violated.

Ontario currently oversees both private domestic adoptions and adoptions involving children from outside of Canada. These processes operate separately from public adoptions conducted through children's aid societies. Provincial officials say the proposed reforms are intended to modernize oversight mechanisms and address gaps that have emerged as adoption practices have evolved over time.

Minister of Children, Community and Social Services Michael Parsa said the province's goal is to reinforce trust in Ontario's adoption system while prioritizing child safety. In the announcement, he stated that the proposed changes would strengthen oversight and help ensure children are protected throughout the adoption process.

Under Ontario's current system, adoption agencies and practitioners must follow provincial regulations and licensing requirements when facilitating private adoptions, whether they are domestic or international.

Among the proposed changes are conditions that would allow the ministry to take stronger enforcement action



The government is increasing oversight of the adoption process to protect children

where concerns arise involving adoption licensees. The government says this could include additional authority to suspend or revoke licences when needed and increase requirements for accountability and reporting.

Ontario officials noted that the adoption process can involve extensive legal, emotional and financial considerations for families, particularly in international cases where multiple jurisdictions and regulatory systems may be involved.

The province says the new updates are intended to reflect changes in adoption practices and place more safeguards in situations where oversight concerns arise during a child's placement process.

The province also says the legislation would improve transparency for families navigating the adoption process. Officials argue that clearer standards and stronger oversight could help prospective adoptive parents understand their rights and responsibilities better while ensuring ethical practices are consistently followed.

Advocates within Ontario's child welfare sector have long called for stronger protections and clearer standards surrounding adoption practices. Organizations such as the Ontario Asso-

cia- tion of Children's Aid Societies have previously emphasized the importance of accountability, privacy protections and child centred approaches across the overall child welfare system.

The announcement comes as Ontario continues to review child welfare services across the province. Government officials say the proposed legislation is designed to improve outcomes for children and youth involved in care and adoption systems currently and allows for more safeguards heading into the future.

Private and international adoptions can involve multiple agencies and jurisdictions, often creating complicated legal and administrative processes for families. The province says the proposed

re- forms aim to ensure consistent standards are applied throughout those procedures while improving oversight mechanisms when concerns arise.

Ontario has not yet indicated when the proposed legislation could move through the provincial legislature, though officials say discussions with partners and agencies will continue as the changes are reviewed. If passed, the amendments would affect adoption practitioners and agencies operating throughout the province.

The government says the proposed changes are ultimately intended to create a stronger, more transparent adoption system centred around child safety and long term wellbeing.



Body cameras now mandatory for frontline customs officers

THE Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) has announced that the wearing of body cameras is now mandatory for customs officers operating in frontline areas, including international airports, wharves, transit sheds and during law-enforcement exercises.

The measure took effect from May 15, 2026, and forms part of the agency's wider customs-modernisation efforts aimed at improving transparency, accountability and operational efficiency.

In a public notice issued on Friday, the GRA said the initiative is intended to strengthen integrity within the customs system while improving public confidence and trust.

"The wearing of body cameras is now mandatory for customs officers in the frontline areas of the international airports, wharves, transit sheds and on



law-enforcement exercises during the performance of their official duties," the notice stated.

According to the GRA, the use of body cameras will also facilitate evidence collection and contribute to the smoother processing of passengers and the examination and release of

goods.

The authority explained that the initiative aligns with ongoing efforts over the past several years to modernise customs operations and ensure greater compliance with trade, tax and border laws.

"This is in keeping with the

GRA's efforts in promoting transparency, accountability, integrity, and facilitate evidence collection, and is geared to instill public confidence and trust in the system," the notice added.

The GRA further noted that the body cameras are expected to improve professionalism among officers, while providing audio-visual evidence that may be required during investigations into incidents or disputes.

To support the initiative, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have already been implemented to govern the management, retention and storage of recorded footage.

The authority also urged members of the public to report any abuse of the system or seek clarification by contacting the Office of the Comptroller at number 227-6060 extensions 2301-2303 or 3201-3210.

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Guyanese promised 'unforgettable' Diamond Jubilee celebration on May 26

AS Guyana prepares to celebrate its 60th Independence Anniversary on May 26, Minister within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Steven Jacobs, says citizens can expect a Diamond Jubilee celebration "unlike any before."

The observances will feature cultural performances, historical re-enactments and what he described as the "best drone show" at the National Stadium in Providence.

Speaking on Starting Point, Jacobs said the independence celebrations are already underway, with activities having commenced in April as part of a wider national observance.

"The Diamond Jubilee is already upon us. We had started already in April," Jacobs said.

He highlighted the recent performances by a Chinese acrobatic troupe, noting that the shows were warmly received by audiences across multiple locations.

"We had a beautiful display, the Chinese acrobatic troupe. Persons really enjoyed that," the minister explained.

According to Jacobs, performances were held at the National Cultural Centre, while additional shows were taken to several communities across the country.

"I must say that the shows were well received. Guyanese turned out and that falls [sic] part of our celebration," he said.

The minister also pointed to entertainment events already taking place as part of the independence festivities, including the One Guyana concert and performances under the Guyana Festival.

"You will have the One Guyana concert, [which] will feature all local artistes. It will be an amazing show," Jacobs said, adding that the "Legends show" had already been staged as part of the festival activities.

He took the opportunity to commend the efforts of the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce in de-



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

livering the Guyana Festival, praising Minister Susan Rodrigues for her work.

"I want to congratulate and commend Susan Rodrigues and what she's doing at the Ministry of Tourism in relation to the Guyana Festival," Jacobs said.

"This idea was birthed by His Excellency, President Irfaan Ali, years ago when he was minister. But what Susan did here also, too, is amazing, and everybody has seen it," he added.

Reflecting on the significance of Guyana's 60 years of independence, Jacobs said the government sought to honour the sacrifices and resilience of previous generations, while celebrating the country's continued progress.

"When we started to plan, we asked

ourselves, 'How can we really celebrate our independence?' because we're standing on the shoulders of persons who sacrificed a lot for us," he explained.

"We stand on the shoulders of resilience and strength and so forth. And to be here, after 60 years of Guyanese shaping their own destiny, and to be in a position where we're now flourishing, we're building out Guyana, [with] amazing opportunities, I think every single Guyanese is very, very proud of that," Jacobs added.

Among the major attractions planned are historical re-enactments aimed at celebrating Guyana's history and heritage.

Jacobs noted that a re-enactment had already been held at the 1823 Monument, while another event is scheduled for May 25 at Fort Island.

Additionally, another re-enactment is planned for May 30 at the Indian Arrival Monument in Palmyra.

However, Jacobs said one of the biggest highlights of the celebrations will unfold on Independence Day itself at Providence, where citizens will be treated to a major drone display and parachuting exhibition.

"On the 26th, you're going to be blown away by the best drone show at Providence. It will be a spectacle," he said.

The minister encouraged Guyanese to attend the event, promising an experience unlike anything previously seen.

"We want every single Guyanese to

be at Providence. You'll see parachuting. It will be amazing, the drone show," he stated.

Jacobs also disclosed plans to bring the drone showcase to other regions, including Berbice.

"We want to take it to Berbice. We're working on that also," he said.

Meanwhile, activities on May 25 at Fort Island will include children's events, cultural performances and decorated ferries designed to enhance the festive atmosphere.

"We'll have ferries that will be at Fort Island. We'll have pontoons designed in a real festive way. You'll have cultural events also on the ferry," Jacobs explained.

He added that large screens would also be installed to showcase Guyana's development and culture.

"Guyana will be on show. Guyana will be on show," Jacobs declared.

"We're working very, very, very, very hard in making sure that this event is something that every single person will remember."



Guyanese can expect fireworks and drone shows

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President Dr Irfaan Ali, Prime Minister Phillips and other government officials at the salute of the 60th anniversary of Independence

‘Independence is not a memory; it is a mission’—President Ali tells Joint Services

COMMANDER-in-CHIEF of the Armed Forces, President, Dr Irfaan Ali, on Saturday delivered a strong message of gratitude, national unity and unwavering sovereignty as he saluted Guyana’s Joint Services ahead of the country’s 60th Independence Anniversary, declaring that the nation’s freedom remains protected through the sacrifices of men and women in uniform.

Addressing members of the Joint Services during the salute of the 60th Independence Anniversary Route March, the President paid tribute to members of the Guyana Defence Force, Guyana Police Force, Guyana Prison Service, Guyana Fire Service and other security agencies, describing them as the guardians of Guyana’s freedom and territorial integrity.

“We salute all our men and women in uniform, and by extension, your families, who allow you this opportunity to serve with the greatest honour and dignity this beautiful country

of ours,” said the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

He added, “The people of Guyana salute you and this morning I honour your courage, your service, your discipline and your dedication.”

Reflecting on Guyana’s independence journey, President Ali said the country’s liberation in 1966 represented more than a ceremonial achievement, but rather a solemn national promise.

“60 years ago, under the Golden Arrowhead, we declared to the world that Guyana is ours,” he said, noting that “independence was not a ceremony, it was a covenant.”

According to the Head of State, that covenant was grounded in the defence of freedom, the protection of Guyana’s borders and the preservation of internal peace.

“A covenant that our freedom would be defended, our borders respected and our people kept safe from internal strife and disorder,” he stated.

He said the ceremonial march by the disciplined services served as a renewal of that pledge, rooted in patriotism and sacrifice.

Quoting from the “Song of the Republic,” the President reminded citizens of the duty to protect Guyana’s lands from external threats, stating that the nation must continuously defend the ideals established at independence.

“Independence without protection is a door with no lock,” Dr Ali declared, emphasising that sovereignty, territorial integrity and national peace are not guaranteed by history alone.

“They are guaranteed by you, the men and women of the Guyana Defence Force, the Guyana Police Force, the Guyana Prison Service, the Guyana Fire Service, our National Intelligence Agency, CANU [Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit] and all the other supporting services that help to keep our country safe,” he said.

The President urged members of the Joint Services to remain vigilant in

safeguarding Guyana’s borders, warning that the country’s growing wealth and resources could attract external interest.

He cautioned, “Guyana is a nation rich in land, rivers and immense resources, and where there is wealth, there is always a hungry eye.

“Our territorial integrity has been threatened before; it will never be threatened again, not only with words, but with a threat of incursions and pressures dressed in diplomacy,” Ali said.

He stressed that national vigilance must remain constant, adding that Guyana’s sovereignty is non-negotiable. “The soldiers patrolling our rivers, the coast guard watching the horizon, the air corps covering our skies, they are the reason our map is not negotiable. Guyana’s sovereignty is not for sale and not for taking, and our Joint Services have the mission of ensuring that mission remains true,” the President asserted.

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Guyana building international tourism brand identity – Minister Rodrigues

MINISTER of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues, has said that Guyana is deliberately working to build a strong international tourism brand identity as the country positions itself more firmly on the global travel map.

Minister Rodrigues made this remark over the weekend, where she outlined the government’s broader strategy for developing the tourism sector beyond events and entertainment, focusing instead on long-term branding, competitiveness and global visibility.

She stated that Guyana’s growing profile as a tourism destination is the result of structured planning and sustained investment aimed at shaping how the country is perceived internationally.

Tourism development, she said, is now closely tied to national branding efforts designed to attract visitors, investors, and cultural engagement from across the world.

At the time, the minister noted that the hosting of events such as the Guyana Festival forms part of a wider strategy serving as a platform to showcase the country’s identity while also reinforcing the positioning as an emerging destination in the region.

She pointed to growing international attention from major global media outlets as evidence of the country’s emerging tourism identity. Rodrigues noted that publications such as Bloomberg, Time Magazine and The New York Times have all highlighted Guyana as an emerging destination.

Rodrigues said tourism today is driven by experience, authenticity and



Guyana’s natural beauty is one of its main attractions

storytelling, and Guyana has a unique opportunity to leverage its cultural diversity and natural offerings to stand out in a competitive global market.

Against this backdrop, she said that the government’s approach has been intentional in strengthening the sector’s supporting systems, including improvements in service delivery, infrastructure, and visitor experience.

Rodrigues emphasised that tourism is no longer being treated as a standalone sector, but as a key part of national development planning, with direct links to economic diversification, employment, and small business opportunities.

This foundation is necessary to sustain growth and ensure that Guyana’s tourism product remains at-

tractive and competitive internationally.

The increasing international attention she noted is evidence that the country’s efforts are yielding results.

The objective, she noted, is to ensure that Guyana’s identity is clearly defined and consistently projected, allowing the country to build a recognisable and credible brand in the global tourism industry.

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

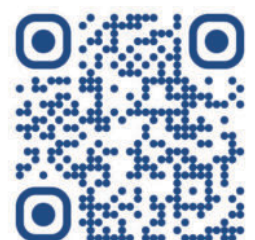
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To find out more about World Guyanese Congress and our goals and priorities. Scan the QR code, or visit www.wgc-org.com

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International Building Expo 2026 nears full capacity as global interest surges

PREPARATIONS are well advanced for the sixth edition of the International Building Expo, with organisers reporting near-full occupancy of exhibition space and growing international participation ahead of the four-day event scheduled for June 25–28, 2026.

Hosted by the Ministry of Housing and Water under the theme “Guyana at 60: Building Strong Foundations for the Sustainable Future,” the expo has already allocated approximately 96 per cent of available booths, signalling strong demand from both local and overseas exhibitors.

Housing and Water Minister Collin Croal, in a telephone interview on Monday, said the response so far has exceeded expectations, with only a limited number of exhibition spaces still available.

He noted that the strong uptake reflects growing international confidence in Guyana’s construction and housing sector.

“We are very pleased with where we are at this stage,” Croal said, adding that a significant number of participating companies are coming from outside Guyana.

According to the Ministry, exhibitors from around 11 countries have expressed



This will be Guyana’s sixth International Building Expo

to showcase developments in housing, infrastructure, and construction technology.

Minister Croal also clarified arrangements for the Ministry’s participation at the event, noting that its main exhibition booth will be positioned at the front of the venue as in previous years. He added that the Ministry will also feature elements of its “Dream Realised” initiative at the rear section of the exhibition space.

However, he said the Ministry will not be processing new housing applications on site during the event, directing prospective applicants instead to regional offices and standard service channels.

The “Dream Realised” component is expected to include another large-scale distribution of land titles, continuing a feature that has become a central attraction of the expo in recent years.

Croal said the Ministry remains optimistic about the 2026 staging, noting that visitors can expect a strong focus on innovation, construction technology, and sector education aimed at improving public understanding of housing and infrastructure development.

First launched in 2010 under the then Minister of Housing and Water, Mohamed Irfaan Ali, the International Building Expo was initially conceived as a platform to connect contractors, suppliers, banks, and investors. Over time, it has expanded significantly in scope and scale and is now regarded as a key regional event for the construction and housing industry, linking Guyana to regional and international markets.

pressed interest in taking part in this year’s event. These include regional partners such as Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as international participants from Canada, the United States, China, Costa Rica, Japan, and Italy, among others. Several local agencies and private-sector entities are also confirmed.

The expo, which has grown into the largest of its kind in the Caribbean, is designed to bring together contractors, suppliers, financial institutions, policy-makers, and investors in a single space



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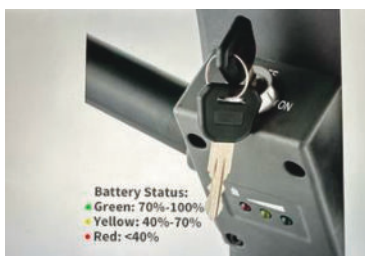
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President Ali hails ‘new golden era’ of banking with new systems

UNDERPINNED by a strong growing economy and rapid modernisation of its financial system, Guyana is entering a new era of global banking, President Dr. Irfaan Ali has said.

Addressing an audience on Saturday evening at the Guyana Bank for Trade and Industry (GBTI)’s 190th Gala Anniversary, President Ali linked the evolution of Guyana’s banking system to the wider transformation of the national economy, arguing that the financial sector is now robust enough to support broad-based prosperity.

“Guyana today possesses a strong and stable financial sector that is helping to underpin the country’s broader economic transformation. Throughout 2025, the banking system has remained well capitalised [and] highly equipped”, he said, adding:

“Public confidence in the banking system remains high. One of the clearest indicators of the sector’s strength has been a remarkable expansion of private sector credit, which grew by 20.4 per cent year on year in 2025.”

One of the clearest indicators of this strength, he said, has been the rapid increase in lending to businesses.

“That growth has been broad-based across virtually every sector. Every productive sector of economy, construction, wholesale, and retail, agriculture services, growth has been even and broad-based that tells the story of a diversified economy,” he emphasised.

For the Head of State, this pattern demonstrates that Guyana’s economy is diversifying and “growing on many pillars,” rather than depending on a single sector.

At the same time, savings and deposits across the banking system have continued to rise, signalling higher disposable incomes and growing financial confidence among households and firms.

“A growing savings base strengthens the long-term stability of the banking sector by providing more reliable domestic funding for investment and development,” he said.

The President placed these developments in a long historical context, recalling that Guyana’s financial system has journeyed from colonial merchant credit and overseas-owned banks, through the state-owned institutions of the 1970s, to a present landscape featuring strong indigenous private banks alongside international players.



President Ali at the GBTI’s gala

He argued that this trajectory has now reached an inflection point, with Guyana poised to leverage its financial strength to deliver wider social and economic gains.

“One might venture to say that we are already in a new golden era of banking in Guyana,” he told the audience.

He pointed to two major developments on the horizon that will soon re-

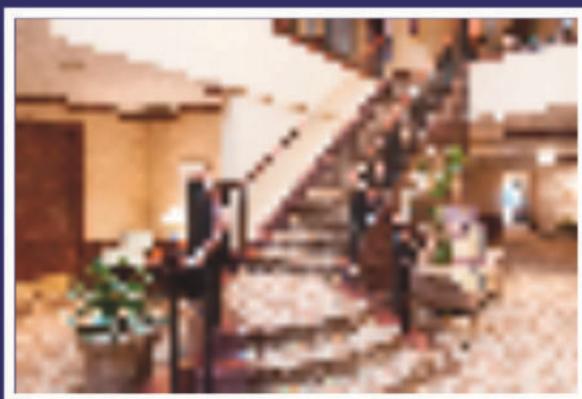
shape and modernise the country’s financial ecosystem. First is the launch of the country’s real-time payment system in June. The second is the introduction of Unified Payment Interface (UPI) and internationally recognised digital payment architecture pioneered by the National Payment Corporation of India.

“Together, these two initiatives are positioned by the foreground of digital financial transformation in the region, creating a faster, safer, and more inclusive payments environment for citizens and businesses alike, but the good news does not end, does not end there,” he added.

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Guyana at 60: Red House exhibition chronicles Guyana's road to sovereignty

AS Guyana prepares to celebrate 60 years of Independence later this month, the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre is offering the public a rare glimpse into the country's political and social history through a new exhibition that brings together decades of archival material, photographs and historical artifacts.

The "Guyana at 60: Independence Exhibition," which opened last Wednesday at Red House, High Street Georgetown, will run until May 29 and has already attracted strong public interest, particularly from schools and history enthusiasts eager to explore lesser-known aspects of the country's journey to nationhood.

Curator Amrita Naraine said the exhibition was designed not only to honour the legacy of former presidents Cheddi Jagan and Janet Jagan, but also to highlight the contributions of political allies, activists and organisations involved in Guyana's independence movement and the formation of the People's Progressive Party.

According to Naraine, the exhibition places particular emphasis on archival images and documents that have rarely been seen by the public, some dating as far back as the 1940s and extending through the post-independence era.

"We thought it was especially important for educators, students and world travellers alike to come across to the Guyana at 60 Exhibition, because there are very many untold stories," Naraine said, noting that the display also captures events surround-



Curator, Amrita Naraine, during a session with pupils from the J E Burnham Primary School

ing the political disturbances of the 1960s.

She explained that the idea for the exhibition emerged in late 2025, but as preparations advanced, organisers realised the research centre possessed a much larger collection of historical material that had not yet been properly sorted or documented.

That discovery, she said, created

an opportunity not only to showcase the materials, but also to begin cataloguing and preserving them for future generations.

"This was an opportunity to look into the collation of that data and start to catalogue them, while at the same time letting people see who was involved in their history, good or bad," she explained.

Naraine, through her company Artellica AI, also incorporated data science and artificial intelligence into the process of organising and sorting the extensive archive collection. She said the use of technology helped improve accessibility and contributed to the overwhelming public response since the exhibition opened on May 13.

Among the most enthusiastic visitors so far have been students. Naraine said classroom sessions have been taking place throughout the week, with schools from across Georgetown already participating.

"I think what has garnered the most interest is the fact that this research centre right here holds the largest amount of archival textual information that there is," she said.

Thus far, 17 schools have confirmed visits to the exhibition, while students from the University of Guyana are also expected to attend.

The exhibition explores Guyana's transition from British colony to independent nation and includes rare photographs, political posters, cultural artifacts and historical documents that trace the country's political struggles, alliances and social transformation.

Naraine noted that the exhibition also sheds light on the role played by international allies, including the United Nations, during Guyana's push for independence.

The exhibition is open Monday to Friday from 09:30 hours to 15:00 hours at Red House and is expected to form part of broader activities commemorating Guyana's 60th Independence anniversary.



Posters at the Independence Exhibition by the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre



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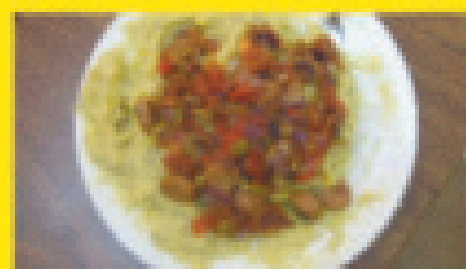


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US Embassy launches '60 Years Strong' campaign to celebrate Guyana

THE United States Embassy in Guyana has launched a new digital campaign titled "60 Years Strong" to commemorate the longstanding relationship between Guyana and the United States as the two nations mark major national milestones this year.

The initiative was announced by U.S. Ambassador Nicole Theriot, who noted that 2026 is significant for both countries, with the United States observing 250 years of independence while Guyana celebrates its 60th anniversary as an independent nation.

In a statement released by the embassy, Ambassador Theriot said the digital series would highlight the enduring partnership between the two countries, which she described as being rooted in shared values, mutual respect and a common vision for development and progress.

According to the ambassador, the

campaign will feature stories centred on democratic principles, bilateral co-operation and the contributions of Guyanese alumni who participated in U.S. exchange programmes and have gone on to make impacts within their communities and professional fields.

The embassy said the series will also focus on areas of co-operation aimed at strengthening regional development and collaboration between the two countries.

Guyana and the United States have maintained diplomatic relations since Guyana gained independence in 1966. Over the decades, the partnership has expanded across sectors including security, trade, health, education, energy and governance.

In recent years, relations between the two countries have deepened amid Guyana's rapidly growing oil-and-gas sector and increased economic and strategic co-operation in the Caribbean region. The United States has also supported a number of initiatives in Guyana through development partnerships, educational exchanges and security collaboration.

The embassy is encouraging public participation in the campaign through the social media hashtags #Freedom250 and #USGuyana60.



The campaign launched by the US Embassy in Georgetown

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Guyana's biodiversity conservation efforts gain momentum with UN support

PRESIDENT Dr. Irfaan Ali has hailed the formal participation of the United Nations in the Global Biodiversity Alliance as a “powerful endorsement” and a critical step in elevating biodiversity protection on the international agenda.

Speaking at the official declaration ceremony held at Office of the President on Monday, President Ali framed the event as “very special, not only for Guyana, but for all of the stakeholders who value the environment [and] value biodiversity.”

He underscored the UN's longstanding role in Guyana's development and expressed hope for deepened collaboration with the right data sets and right priorities.

“Biodiversity is collapsing at a rate unprecedented in human history, with up to 1 million species now at risk of extinction. The rapid loss of the world's biodiversity is a direct threat to food security, water systems, public health, and the global economy. It is, in other words, an existential threat to humanity,” President Ali said.

The President said the UN's participation was both “a natural fit and a powerful endorsement” of the alliance's work, noting that biodiversity protection is now central to the UN system's global agenda, from the Convention on Biological Diversity to the Sustainable Development Goals.

“It is natural because biodiversity protection has become central to the global agenda of the United Nations system, and it's powerful because the presence of the world's foremost multilateral institution elevates the credibility, reach, and impact of this initiative. The United Nations has long stood at the forefront of global efforts to protect the environment and promote sustainable development,” the President said.

He further highlighted the UN's role in placing biodiversity “at the centre of global policy making” and in recognising that it is inseparable from economic development, poverty reduction, climate resilience, food production, public health and social stability.

President Ali stressed that biodiversity must be integrated into sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, energy, tourism, urban planning and national



Dr. Irfaan Ali with UN Resident Coordinator, Jean Kamau

economic policy, aligning this approach with the core philosophy of the Global Biodiversity Alliance.

President Ali issued a broad invitation to international organisations, development partners, multilateral institutions and sovereign states to join the alliance, arguing that the biodiversity crisis is “too large, too complex, and too interconnected for any single country or institution to address alone.

He called for collective action at a scale never seen before, involving governments, civil society, indigenous peoples, the private sector and the scientific community.

Meanwhile, UN Resident Coordinator Jean Kamau said the alliance aligns closely with international sustain-

able development priorities and reinforces South-South co-operation.

The UN is now the 97th member to join the global biodiversity alliance.

“Today's ceremony reflects more than a commitment on paper; it demonstrates our shared vision for safeguarding the natural heritage of our planet for present and future generations. Biodiversity is not only a cornerstone of environmental sustainability, but also a fundamental pillar of economic resilience, food security, cultural identity, and human well-being,” Kamau said.

Guyana's leadership in biodiversity conservation is bolstered by collaborations with major global institutions and organisations including Yale Center for Biodiversity and Global Change, Conservation International, the World Bank, the Government of Brazil and other

states, alongside Indigenous communities and private sector partners in green finance.

In 2025, the country had launched the Global Biodiversity Alliance.

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Gautam Adani, the chairman of Adani Group, is one of the world's richest men

US drops fraud charges against Indian tycoon Adani over Iran sanctions

The US Department of Justice has dropped criminal fraud charges against Indian billionaire Gautam Adani and some officials of his firm, days after he agreed to settle a separate civil case.

Adani Enterprises, his group's flagship firm, also agreed to pay \$275m (£205m) to the US Treasury to settle a separate investigation into alleged violations of sanctions on Iran.

Sources told the BBC that the Adani Group has now resolved all three legal cases against it in the US. This will pave the way for Adani to travel to the US without risk of legal proceedings.

Media reports say the dropped charges reflect a broader move away from prosecuting foreign bribery cases under Donald Trump's administration.

Adani, 63, is one of the world's richest people, worth \$82bn according to Forbes. His Adani Group is one of India's largest business conglomerates with interests in sectors including energy, ports and airports.

The cases against him had generated a lot of attention in the US and India.

In 2024, the US justice department registered criminal fraud charges against Adani and various officials from his company for allegedly paying bribes to Indian officials for high-profile renewable energy projects and misleading US investors about it. He and his company strongly denied the allegations.

Adani Green Energy said in a filing to regulators on Monday that the US justice department had "filed a motion seeking dismissal with preju-

dice of the charges" against Adani, his nephew Sagar and other group officials. The BBC has seen a copy of an order issued by the US District Court in the Eastern District of New York ordering the case to be dismissed.

The move to drop the charges reportedly came after Adani hired a new team of lawyers led by Robert J Giuffra Jr, head of one of the most powerful law firms in the US and one of President Trump's personal legal advisers.

Giuffra reportedly met last month with justice department officials to lay out concerns about the case.

The New York Times reported, citing sources, that the lawyers said Adani would invest \$10bn in the US and create 15,000 jobs if prosecutors dropped the charges against him, repeating a pledge the billionaire made to Trump shortly after he won the 2024 presidential election.

The BBC has sought a response from the US Department of Justice and the Adani Group.

Last week, the US Securities and Exchange Commission moved to drop fraud charges against Adani and his nephew Sagar in a separate civil case after they agreed to pay a combined settlement of \$18m.

The agreement, which did not include any admission or denial of the allegations, barred the Adanis from future violations of key US anti-fraud laws covering investor deception, securities fraud and market manipulation.

Separately, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) announced on Monday that Adani Enterprises had agreed to settle a civil case against the firm for allegedly violating sanctions placed by the US on Iran.

In a press release, the treasury department said that from November 2023 to June 2025, Adani Enterprises purchased shipments of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) from a Dubai-based trader purporting to supply Omani and Iraqi gas which actually originated from Iran.

During this time period, this caused US financial institutions to process 32 US dollar-denominated payments totalling approximately \$192m for the shipments, the statement added.



ARIES (March 21 - April 20): Maybe it's inevitable that you feel a bit down now that Mars has exited your sign, but it's not the end of the world. You started a lot of new things in recent weeks and now you must move to the next stage and start making them pay.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21): Even if you are the kind of Taurus who prefers to keep a low profile that won't be possible over the next few days. With Mars in your sign you will attract attention whether you like it or not, hopefully for the right reasons.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21): Don't worry too much if you have this feeling of dread about what might happen next, because the Sun's move into your birth sign tomorrow will show you the way out of your current dilemma. It's all good and about to get even better.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23): Today's link between love planet Venus and energy planet Mars will encourage you to be more open about your feelings for someone. Don't worry that they might reject your advances because almost certainly they have equally warm feelings for you.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23): Mars moving through the career area of your chart means you won't be slow to take advantage of new opportunities, even if they seem a bit risky. The world is full of people who could have been successful but failed to act. You're not one of them.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23): If you need assistance today you must open your mouth and ask for it. It would be nice if people could read your mind and give you what you desire but that isn't going to happen, so get real and be more outgoing in your relationships.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23): It's not like you to let your fears get the better of you but that appears to be the case at the moment. Fortunately, Mars in one of the more secretive areas of your chart will encourage you to do something about it. Don't suffer in silence.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22): There is a danger that you could be a bit too aggressive and turn against you someone you will need on your side. Yes, it's good that you are able to assert yourself but don't overdo it and hurt other people, including the people you love.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21): The Sun is about to move into the partnership area of your chart, which among other things will make it easier for you to work as part of a team. Be careful though that your co-workers don't cheat and overload you with all the heavy stuff.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20): Mars in the most dynamic area of your chart will inspire you to push beyond your usual limits and create something extra special. You may not yet know what that something is going to be but it's sure to be amazing.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19): Mars in the domestic area of your chart will encourage you to get to grips with a situation that has dragged on too long. Let those around you know that your patience has finally run out and that it's time to settle the matter.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20): Don't try to avoid the challenges that life brings your way, meet them head-on and bend them to your will. This is one of those occasions when you really have no option but to be more aggressive in your thinking, and in your actions too.

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T&T refuses to recognize CARICOM secretary general beyond August

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar says Trinidad and Tobago will not recognize Dr. Carla Barnett as Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) after her current term ends in August, despite regional leaders maintaining that she has already been reappointed for another five years.

“Trinidad and Tobago only recognises Barnett as SG until the end of her term this August 2026. All CARICOM leaders could do as they please, but Trinidad and Tobago will not recognise her as SG for a next term. That’s not going to change,” Persad-Bissessar told the Trinidad Express newspaper.

“We have already made that clear. We do not recognise her after August 2026. This is our final position,” she added.

Last week, Roosevelt Skerit said Barnett, a Belizean economist who became CARICOM’s eighth Secretary General in 2021, had been properly reappointed and that Dominica supported the decision.

“The issue of the Secretary-General, this has been, I’m not sure why you asked me the question, but this thing has been ventilated in the public domain. I mean, every plate and spoon in the kitchen has been exposed on this matter,” Skerit said during a news conference last Wednesday.

According to the Trinidad Guardian, CARICOM leaders held a five-hour discussion over the weekend regarding Trinidad and Tobago’s objections to Barnett’s reappointment and agreed not to revisit the February decision approving her second term.

The dispute centers on the process used to reappoint Barnett during the CARICOM summit held in Basseterre, St. Kitts and Nevis, in February. CARICOM Chairman and St. Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Terrance Drew later announced that Barnett had secured the “required majority” support from regional leaders.

However, Persad-Bissessar, who was not present when the vote took place, has repeatedly challenged the legitimacy of the process.

She has also accused Barnett of authoring a CARICOM statement issued by Drew defending her own reappointment and claimed that Trinidad and Tobago’s Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, Sean Sobers, had been “disinvited” from a regional retreat via WhatsApp.

“No, they are still hiding from providing responses. It’s really shameful that the entire group knows that Barnett did disinvite Minister Sobers via What-



Dr Carla Barnett and Kamla Persad-Bissessar

sApp, but they still persist in continuing with dishonesty,” Persad-Bissessar told the Trinidad Express.

“Everyone also knows that Barnett authored chairman Drew’s Caricom press release to clear herself and deliberately left out her WhatsApp message disinviting Minister Sobers that’s still on the COFCOR WhatsApp group, by the way,” she added.

Despite the dispute, Persad-Bissessar said Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to regional integration but would not remain silent

on what she described as the “dysfunctional and chaotic state” of the 52-year-old organization.

She also dismissed suggestions that the matter should be taken before the Trinidad-based Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), noting that Trinidad and Tobago does not use the court as its final appellate court and would not move to adopt it in that role.

Persad-Bissessar further stated that her government would not be concerned if Trinidad and Tobago were removed from CARICOM.

“They are free to do as they wish. I’m not bothered. We have already made our position clear; they are free to expel us from CARICOM if they wish to do so. They are free to work with us if they wish to do so. Life goes on in Trinidad and Tobago, with or without CARICOM. The world stops for no one,” she said.

The prime minister added that her administration is seeking to strengthen trade ties beyond the Caribbean region, including with the Middle East, South America, India, and Africa.

US citizen found dead in Jamaica during birthday trip

A New York accountant who traveled to Jamaica to celebrate her birthday was allegedly murdered shortly after arriving on the island, with police now conducting an active manhunt for her husband, who is considered a person of interest in the case.

Melissa Kerry Samnath, originally from Queens Village, New York, arrived in Jamaica on April 29, 2026, to celebrate her birthday. Shortly after landing, she reportedly sent urgent WhatsApp messages to relatives in New York pleading for help, according to a Gleaner report.

In one of the final messages, she wrote: “I need you to call the cops. ... Look at my location ... It is a pink house,” sent just over an hour before her birthday. It was the last known communication her family received from her.

According to a Gleaner report, the family later received a distressing phone call from Jamaica in which a woman identified as the suspected killer’s mother allegedly told relatives that Samnath had been killed. The call, combined with her final messages, left the family devastated and searching for answers.

Police say Samnath was taken to Cornwall Regional Hospital in St James by her husband, Dane Watson, whom investigators believe she married in December 2025.

Authorities allege Watson assisted her from a vehicle before leaving the hospital shortly afterward. Hospital staff

later pronounced her dead and alerted police.

Watson has since been named a person of interest and is being actively sought by investigators. Police are urging him to report to the Freeport Police Station in St James or the nearest police station.

A post-mortem examination conducted on May 6 determined that Samnath died as a result of multiple blunt force trauma injuries to the head, according to investigators.

The findings confirmed the case is being treated as a homicide investigation.

Police also confirmed that evidence relevant to the investigation was recovered from a premises in Norwood, St James, where Samnath is believed to have been taken.

According to a Gleaner report, detectives found her belongings alongside pools of blood inside the property. Residents in the area reported seeing a heavy police presence but said they did not hear any screams or disturbances on the night of the incident.

Surveillance footage reportedly shows the suspect carrying Samnath’s suitcases while she followed behind him from an Airbnb, though it remains unclear whether she left willingly.

Despite extensive searches and multiple police operations, the suspect has not yet been located.

UN warns Cuba's healthcare system under severe strain amid power outages

Hospitals across Cuba are suspending surgeries, struggling to keep critical equipment running, and facing severe medicine shortages as prolonged blackouts and fuel constraints deepen pressure on the country's healthcare system, senior United Nations officials warned Friday.

Officials from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) said hospitals are increasingly unable to maintain stable emergency and routine services due to shortages of electricity, fuel, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies.

The briefing was delivered by OCHA's Edem Wosornu and WHO's Altaf Musani following a three-day mission to the island.

They said disruptions are affecting emergency care, blood banks, laboratories, immunization programs, and maternal and child health services.

In some regions, blackouts lasting up to 20 hours have forced hospitals to postpone non-emergency surgeries, while fuel shortages are limiting ambulance operations and delaying access to urgent care.

Officials estimated that more than 100,000 patients—including about 11,000 children—are currently waiting for delayed surgical procedures linked to outages and supply constraints.

They also warned that roughly five million people living with chronic illnesses face interruptions to essential treatment, including patients requiring



Cuban hospitals are under severe strain due to power outages caused by fuel shortages

radiation therapy and chemotherapy.

"Human cost is significant and continues to grow," Musani said, noting that clinics are operating under unstable conditions with critical shortages of supplies and electricity.

Maternal health services are also under pressure, with more than 32,000 pregnant women facing heightened risks due to reduced access to diagnos-

tics, transport disruptions and unreliable power supplies in neonatal units.

"Staff have to carry water up the stairs while women give birth since pumps don't work," Wosornu said, describing conditions inside some facilities.

She added that transportation breakdowns are also affecting food deliveries, reducing access to fresh pro-

duce and protein for vulnerable populations.

Public health experts warned that disruptions to water systems, refrigeration and sanitation could increase the risk of diseases such as dengue and chikungunya. Immunization programs remain in place but are being strained by cold-chain failures and logistical challenges.

Barbados strengthens diplomatic ties with Ireland

Barbados has officially established its first resident embassy in Ireland, a move aimed at strengthening diplomatic, trade, tourism and cultural relations between the two island nations.

Prime Minister Mia Mottley formally opened the chancery in Dublin earlier this week as Barbados and Ireland marked 25 years of diplomatic relations.

"Today truly is a moment where we deliberately and by choice formalise that relationship through an active presence," Prime Minister Mottley said at the opening ceremony.

She said the ties between the two countries extend beyond formal diplomacy, pointing to shared historical experiences involving Irish indentured servants and enslaved Africans in Barbados during the 1600s.

"That early linkage, with your people coming as indentured servants and our people coming as slaves, meant that we understood together what it was to be pawns in the hands of those who had ambitions that simply did not see us, did not hear us and did not feel us

as human beings," Prime Minister Mottley said.

She added that both nations have since built resilience through their respective struggles for independence from British rule.

"It is not a coincidence that we share so much in common: our values, our aspirations, our ambitions, but equally our journey," she said. "The Irish know about resilience, and Bajans know about resilience."

The new embassy will be led by Barbados' first resident ambassador to Ireland, Cleviston Haynes, and is expected to support expanded cooperation in trade, tourism, investment, education, climate resilience and cultural exchange.

Prime Minister Mottley was joined at the ceremony by Senior Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Christopher Sinckler, Irish officials, members of the Barbadian diaspora and supporters of Barbados living in Ireland.

Ambassador Haynes said the embassy marks a significant step in deep-

ening political and economic cooperation between the two countries.

He noted that Irish investment already supports sectors including tourism, telecommunications and healthcare in Barbados, while partnerships with Ireland's Marine Institute are advancing Barbados' blue economy ambitions.

He also highlighted opportunities for increased tourism and business travel through trial Aer Lingus services between Dublin and Barbados.

The opening comes as Barbados prepares to celebrate 60 years of independence and five years as a republic.

Prime Minister Mottley said the Barbados-Ireland relationship should evolve into "a living partnership" focused on climate justice, peace, equity and the interests of small island developing states.

Former Ceann Comhairle, or Speaker of Ireland's parliament, Seán Ó Fearghaíl, described Barbados as a stable and well-governed country attractive to Irish investors.

"We have shared visions. We have shared values," he said. "When they look to Barbados, that is exactly what they see."



Barbados regulators monitoring transactions linked to 1MDB scandal

Financial regulators in Barbados are monitoring suspicious financial transactions involving millions of dollars allegedly linked to funds misappropriated from Malaysia's state-owned 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

According to Barbados Today, the Central Bank of Barbados and the Financial Services Commission (FSC) confirmed they are tracking developments after the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) disclosed that it had secured a court order freezing approximately US\$1.7 million held in accounts at a Barbados-based bank with Swiss headquarters.

The MACC said the order was granted by a Kuala Lumpur High Court in April under Malaysia's anti-money laundering legislation after investigators linked the funds to suspected money laundering activities.

According to Malaysian authorities, investigations found that between 2014 and 2019, several individuals connected to offshore companies allegedly received, concealed, transferred and converted proceeds of unlawful activities through Barbados-based accounts.

The funds subject to the court order include more than US\$56,000 linked to one investment entity and approximately US\$1.65 million connected to another institution.

Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, Kevin Greenidge, told Bar-



Central Bank of Barbados

bados Today that the bank was aware of reports concerning the foreign court order but declined to comment on specific supervisory matters.

Greenidge said Barbados' regulatory framework requires financial institutions to comply with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing obligations and noted that authorities cooperate with domestic and international agencies in accordance with the law.

The FSC also confirmed it was

monitoring the situation, noting that such matters involve coordination among multiple agencies, including Barbados' Financial Intelligence Unit and overseas authorities.

The 1MDB scandal is one of the world's largest corruption cases and has involved allegations of money laundering, fraud and theft linked to billions of US dollars from the Malaysian state investment fund.

The scandal contributed to the downfall and imprisonment of former

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak.

United States authorities previously alleged that at least US\$3.5 billion was stolen from the fund, while later estimates placed the amount at approximately US\$4.5 billion.

The United States Department of Justice has since recovered and returned more than US\$1.2 billion in misappropriated 1MDB-related assets to Malaysia as part of an ongoing international anti-corruption effort.

A&B moves to make Spanish its official second language

Antigua and Barbuda is set to make Spanish its official second language under a new government policy aimed at expanding multilingual education and strengthening regional and international ties, according to a statement from the Cabinet.

The announcement follows a weekly Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Gaston Browne, where officials approved a broad language and integration strategy that will see Spanish introduced as a core subject across the national education system.

As part of the policy, the Ministry of Education and Science and Technology has been instructed to restructure the curriculum at the pre-school, primary and secondary levels to embed Spanish instruction more deeply throughout students' schooling.

Officials said the move reflects Antigua and Barbuda's expanding engagement with Spanish-speaking coun-

tries and the need to equip future generations with language skills that can support education, diplomacy, tourism, trade and employment opportunities.

"The Government believes that strengthening Spanish language competency among citizens and residents will improve communication, regional integration, tourism, trade and workforce competitiveness, while enhancing Antigua and Barbuda's capacity to engage more effectively with Spanish-speaking countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean," the statement said.

The policy also highlights longstanding cultural and social ties with the Dominican Republic, noting the contribution of the Dominican community to national development and growing people-to-people connections between the two countries.

Alongside the language reform, Cabinet approved a new Dominican

Republic Integration Programme (DRIP), designed to deepen economic, cultural and institutional cooperation between Antigua and Barbuda and the Dominican Republic.

The initiative is expected to facilitate trade and investment flows, strengthen tourism and education collaboration, and provide more structured support for Dominican residents living in the country.

A key component of the plan includes the establishment of a Spanish Desk within the Office of the Prime Minister, intended to serve as a dedi-

cated point of contact for Spanish-speaking residents seeking access to government services and assistance.

Cabinet said the desk will improve communication and community integration while supporting smoother engagement between government institutions and Spanish-speaking populations.

Officials described the broader policy shift as part of a wider effort to promote inclusion, regional cooperation and national development in an increasingly interconnected Caribbean and global environment.

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Jamaica unveils new airline routes, \$5 billion tourism investment push

Jamaica's tourism sector is poised for major expansion with new airline routes, billions in hotel investments, and a regional aviation summit on the horizon, according to announcements made by Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett at the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's Caribbean Travel Marketplace 2026.

The developments come as Jamaica recorded more than one million visitors and approximately US\$956 million in foreign exchange earnings during the first quarter of 2026, signaling a strong recovery just six months after Hurricane Melissa impacted the island.

Among the key announcements was the expansion of airlift into Montego Bay. Canadian carrier Porter Airlines will introduce new direct nonstop service from Toronto Pearson, Ottawa, and Hamilton, adding nearly 5,000 seats for the winter travel season.

"Every new route supports jobs. Every additional seat supports small businesses. Every flight creates an economic ripple effect that extends far beyond the airport," Bartlett said. "These announcements reflect the extraordinary confidence that airlines and investors continue to place in Destination Jamaica."

Additional air service growth is expected from Latin America through Wingo, while Virgin Atlantic will continue expanding routes from the United Kingdom, further strengthening Jamaica's connectivity to established and emerging tourism markets.

The government also outlined plans for a significant expansion of the country's hotel sector, with between 15,000 and 20,000 new rooms projected over the next five to 10 years.



Ed Bartlett, Jamaica's Minister of Tourism

The developments represent an estimated US\$5 billion in investment.

Projects highlighted include The Pinnacle residential and hospitality development and continued expansion within the Rose Hall Tourism Development Corridor.

"This is not incremental growth — this is transformational investment in Jamaica's tourism future," Bartlett said. "We are building a tourism ecosystem that includes large resorts,

boutique hotels, gastronomy, wellness, music, and adventure. Because today's traveller is looking for experiences that are meaningful and memorable — and Jamaica delivers that naturally."

Jamaica will also host the Caribbean Tourism Organization's Air Connectivity Summit in Kingston in February 2027. The summit is expected to bring together airline executives, government officials, and regional tourism stakeholders to discuss avia-

tion planning and strategies for improving regional and international connectivity.

Tourism officials said Jamaica's diversification efforts are also producing results, with visitor arrivals from Latin America increasing by 25 percent year-to-date and arrivals from Asia growing by 7 percent.

Cruise tourism also posted gains, with 591,861 cruise passengers arriving between January and April 2026, surpassing figures from the same period last year.

Director of Tourism Donovan White pointed to Jamaica's expanding global visibility as another factor driving interest in the destination. Earlier this year, the NBC TODAY show broadcast live from Jamaica, exposing millions of viewers in the United States to the island.

"Jamaica's cultural influence extends far beyond our geographic size," White said. "Whether it is on television screens or at festivals thousands of miles away, every moment of global visibility becomes an invitation for people to experience Jamaica for themselves."

Tourism officials also credited Jamaica's year-round events calendar — including the Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee Festival, Carnival in Jamaica, Lost in Time Festival, and Reggae Sumfest — with helping to sustain visitor growth.

"The story of Jamaica over the last several months has not been a story of disruption alone," Bartlett said. "It has been a story of resilience, partnership, and innovation. Our mission is to build a tourism industry that is more resilient and more deeply connected to the people it serves."

Fatal police shooting reignites body cam debate

The Independent Commission of Investigations (INDECOM) in Jamaica has launched a probe into the fatal police shooting of 45-year-old Latoya Bulgin, also known as "Buju," in Granville, St James, on Sunday, May 17, 2026, as renewed scrutiny builds over the absence of body-worn cameras and rising police fatal shooting figures.

The woman was reportedly killed during an altercation with police officers who were in the area monitoring a protest that had been staged to highlight the killing of a 17-year-old boy in a separate police shooting incident a week earlier. According to early reports, tensions escalated during the demonstration before the confrontation between the woman and law enforcement, resulting in the shooting.

INDECOM said it was notified and has begun an independent investigation after CCTV footage of the incident circulated widely on social media.

In a statement issued Monday, the commission said citizen-recorded video continues to play a critical role in modern oversight of law enforcement.

"The emergence of video evidence by citizens in matters involving the use of force by law enforcement continues to underscore the importance of technology and independent visual documentation in modern policing oversight," INDECOM said.

It added that such footage helps investigators assess "the conduct of all parties involved, as well as assessing the necessity and proportionality of the use of force," while also assisting police leadership in making "timely and informed administrative and operational decisions" following critical incidents.

INDECOM confirmed that no body-worn cameras were issued to or worn by the three officers involved, who were reportedly conducting crowd

control duties in relation to a protest at the time of the shooting. The commission has urged witnesses, including occupants of the vehicle driven by Bulgin, to come forward with information and additional footage to support the investigation.

The shooting has also drawn political reaction. Member of Parliament for St James West Central Marlene Malahoo Forte said officers should face immediate consequences based on initial observations at the scene, while cautioning that due process must be followed.

"I think this one doesn't look so good," she told Gleaner reporters. "Can't prejudge it, but it doesn't look good."

The case has also reignited debate over body-worn cameras, particularly after recent comments from National Security Minister Dr. Horace Chang questioning their effectiveness in

armed encounters.

Chang has previously said, "It (a body-worn camera) is of very little value," arguing that in gunfights officers are focused on survival rather than recording footage.

He added, "You put a camera on your chest, you start shooting at somebody, they start shooting at you, you going to dive for cover," and described expectations for cameras in high-intensity operations as "a crazy idea" when confronting heavily armed suspects.

Chang has maintained that body cameras are more useful in lower-risk policing scenarios such as public order situations and routine enforcement activities.

However, oversight bodies and human rights advocates have consistently pushed back, arguing that body-worn cameras remain essential for accountability even in high-risk operations.

CARICOM urges protection of Strait of Hormuz transit passage

CARICOM has expressed growing concern over escalating hostilities in the Middle East, warning that military activity affecting the Strait of Hormuz could have serious consequences for global trade, energy markets, and small import-dependent nations across the Caribbean.

In a statement issued Monday from the CARICOM Secretariat in Georgetown, Guyana, regional leaders said they were alarmed by the continued violence, loss of life, threats to civilian infrastructure, and instability in international markets stemming from the conflict.

The regional bloc highlighted the importance of the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical maritime trade routes, noting that disruptions to shipping through the area have far-reaching implications for supply chains, freight costs, and access to essential goods.

CARICOM reaffirmed its support for the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, commonly known as UNCLOS, emphasizing that all CARICOM member states are parties to the agreement.

"The rights conferred by the UNCLOS are firmly entrenched in customary international law, and are binding on all States, regardless of whether they are States Parties to UNCLOS," the statement said.

The organization also stressed that the right of maritime transit passage should not depend on "any license, levy, or authorization," adding that bordering states should not obstruct or suspend transit through the strait.

CARICOM called on all parties

involved in the conflict to respect international law, ensure the safety of vessels and seafarers, and restore safe and unimpeded passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

The regional body also urged an immediate de-escalation of tensions and a cessation of hostilities.

"CARICOM will continue to closely monitor developments in the

Middle East and remains steadfast in its support for diplomacy to promote sustainable peace in the region and greater stability globally," the statement added.



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Rayudu crowns Narine IPL's greatest after another match-winning masterclass

Two hundred matches into a remarkable Indian Premier League career, Sunil Narine is still producing performances that leave former players searching for new superlatives.

The Kolkata Knight Riders all-rounder once again proved decisive in IPL 2026, delivering a disciplined spell of two for 29 from four overs to guide KKR to a commanding 29-run victory over Gujarat Titans. The performance earned Narine the player-of-the-match award in his milestone 200th IPL appearance and reignited debate about where he ranks among the league's all-time greats.

For former India batter Ambati Rayudu, the answer is already settled.

Speaking on ESPNcricinfo's TimeOut show, Rayudu declared that Narine stands alone at the summit of IPL history because of his unmatched ability to influence matches across multiple eras of the competition.

"Proper match-winner with the ball, and with the bat," Rayudu said. "There have been such great players in the IPL, but this guy always stands out. He's on the top of the list for me."

The praise reflected not only Narine's latest performance, but also the extraordinary consistency that has defined his journey since arriving at Kolkata Knight Riders in 2012.

Former India all-rounder Sanjay Bangar echoed those sentiments, describing Narine as "a legend of the league" while placing the West Indian among the five greatest IPL performers of all time.

Bangar pointed to Narine's ability to evolve throughout his career, partic-



Sunil Narine — stands alone because of his ability

ularly during periods when scrutiny over his bowling action threatened to derail his effectiveness.

"He seems to have found another way of delivering with the same over-spin that you generally associate with his skill set, while retaining the ability to get the ball turning both ways," Bangar said. "That puts massive doubts in the batter's mind."

Even after years of analysis from opponents and changes in T20 batting philosophy, Narine continues to remain one of the most difficult bowlers to at-

tack.

Narine's statistical record reinforces the admiration surrounding his career.

The Trinidadian spinner currently ranks third on the IPL's all-time wicket-taking list with 205 wickets, trailing only Yuzvendra Chahal and Bhuvneshwar Kumar. He is also the most-capped overseas player in league history and has represented only Kolkata Knight Riders throughout his IPL career.

His influence has been central to KKR's championship triumphs in 2012,

2014, and 2024.

In his debut season, Narine collected 24 wickets at a stunning economy rate of 5.47. He followed that effort with 21 wickets at 6.35 during KKR's 2014 title run and later added 17 wickets at 6.69 in the franchise's victorious 2024 campaign.

Perhaps most remarkably, Narine has never recorded an economy rate above eight runs per over in any IPL season. In the current campaign, he is conceding just 6.79 runs per over.

Bangar argued that Narine's latest match-winning spell against Gujarat Titans was not unusual by his standards, and that, in itself, highlights the scale of his greatness.

"These are regulation figures for him," Bangar said. "He has not done anything extraordinary, he has just done what he does on a regular basis."

That relentless consistency across more than a decade of IPL cricket has allowed Narine to remain elite in a format increasingly dominated by aggressive batting.

Rayudu also offered insight into why Narine continues to trouble even the most explosive T20 hitters.

"With Sunil Narine, everything he bowls tends to just hold in the surface," Rayudu said. "His ball never skids onto the bat. As a batsman, it's always tough to line him up because the ball tends to hold and you lose your shape more often than not."

For opponents, the challenge has remained constant for more than a decade. For Narine, so has the excellence.

CPL draft shocker: Guyana loses Motie to Barbados

The countdown to the 2026 Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) has officially begun, and the annual player draft has already reshaped the tournament landscape with marquee transfers, emotional reunions, and strategic roster rebuilds across all seven franchises.

Set to run from August 7 through September 20, the upcoming CPL season promises another fiercely competitive chapter, with overseas signings still to come in the weeks ahead. Yet even before the international names arrive, several franchises have already made bold statements through their local selections.

The most stunning development of the draft came with the end of an era in Guyana.

After five seasons with the Guyana Amazon Warriors, star left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie is headed to the Barbados Tridents in what quickly became the defining move of the draft.

Barbados not only secured one of the Caribbean's premier T20 bowlers but also reunited with explosive Guyanese batter Sherfane Rutherford, who previ-

ously represented the franchise in 2025.

The Tridents leaned heavily into continuity as they exercised their Right to Match Options to retain Brandon King, Kadeem Alleyne, Rivaldo Clarke, Johann Layne, and Kofi James. Zishan Motara will also return in Barbados colors for the 2026 campaign.

Fresh off their title-winning season, the Trinbago Knight Riders chose stability over sweeping change.

The defending champions used RMOs to preserve the spine of their championship squad, retaining veteran stars Sunil Narine, Nicholas Pooran, Kieron Pollard, Akeal Hosein, and Terrence Hinds.

At the same time, the franchise injected fresh energy into the line-up. Barbadian all-rounders Justin Greaves and Dominic Drakes will suit up for the Knight Riders for the first time.

There was also a homegrown success story, as Jyd Goolie returns to represent his native franchise after spending the 2025 season with the St Kitts & Nevis Patriots. Dexter Sween and Abdul Raheem-Toppin complete the list of new

additions.

The St Kitts & Nevis Patriots may have produced the draft's most intimidating batting partnership.

The franchise signed Johnson Charles, the CPL's all-time leading run-scorer, and paired him with Andre Fletcher, retained through the RMO process and currently second on the league's career scoring list.

That combination instantly gives the Patriots one of the most experienced and destructive opening duos in tournament history.

The team also retained Kyle Mayers, Alick Athanaze, and Mikyle Louis, while former title-winning captain Jason Holder returns to the franchise in a notable reunion. Kevin Wickham and Obed McCoy are set to wear Patriots colors for the first time.

Gudakesh Motie's departure undoubtedly leaves a major void for the Guyana Amazon Warriors, but the franchise wasted little time reshaping its bowling attack.

Former Saint Lucia Kings spinner Khary Pierre was brought in as Motie's

replacement, giving the Warriors another experienced left-arm option.

Guyana also succeeded in maintaining much of its core identity, retaining Shimron Hetmyer, Romario Shepherd, Shai Hope, and rising fast-bowling star Shamar Joseph through RMOs.

The franchise doubled down on local representation as Ronaldo Alimohamed, Veersammy Permaul, Mavendra Dindyal, and Jonathan van Lange joined the roster. Impressively, 10 of the Warriors' 12 local selections are Guyanese players.

The Jamaica Kingsmen focused heavily on explosive T20 talent during the draft, securing two of the region's most dangerous match-winners in Roman Powell and Andre Russell.

They will join a strong Jamaican contingent featuring Odean Smith, Vitel Lawes, Jeavor Royal, and Kirk McKenzie.

The Kingsmen also strengthened their depth with experienced CPL performers Keemo Paul, Keacy Carty, and Shaqkere Parris.



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Guyana at 60: Through the Years

A look at progress...through pictures



These two street captures show Georgetown in the 1960s, with the Stabroek Market in the background



At left, Georgetown in the 1970s, while the 1980s is at right



The 1990s saw the opening of the new Cheddi Jagan Airport, while the 2000's brought the modern Marriott Hotel



Today, the Bharrat Jagdeo Demerara Bridge stands as the crown jewel in Guyana's infrastructure development



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