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## Guyana, Canada sign Air Agreement

Guyana and Canada have signed a historic Air Services Agreement, modernizing the framework for air travel between the two countries.

Negotiated at the technical level in 2014 and now formally concluded, this agreement replaces the restrictive 2005 pact and signals a new era of enhanced connectivity and cooperation.

The Agreement covers a comprehensive range of aviation protocols, including Grant of Rights, Designations, Application of Laws, Pricing, Terms of Carriage, Safety Standards, Certificates and Licences, Aviation Security, and charges for airports and aviation facilities.

This robust framework ensures safe, efficient, and competitive air services. Currently, Air Transat and Cargojet operate flights between Guyana and Canada.

The Government of Guyana is also in advanced discussions with additional airlines interested in launching services, reflecting strong market potential for passenger and cargo growth.

Canada is home to the world's second largest Guyanese diaspora, primarily in Toronto. This Agreement supports easier travel for families, strengthens business and tourism, and deepens the longstanding ties between the two nations.

The Agreement was signed on the sidelines of the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/7) in Montreal by the Honourable Deodat Indar, Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation, for Guyana, and Michael Vandergrift, Deputy Minister of Transport, for Canada (photo above).

Guyana and Canada have maintained diplomatic relations since May 26, 1966, a partnership now strengthened by this agreement. *Story inside*



## Linden bridge named for Sam Hinds

Three respected Guyanese leaders were honoured on Sunday night as the new four-lane Mackenzie-Wismar Bridge opened in Linden, Region Ten.

The bridge has been named the Samuel Hinds River Bridge, in honour of the leader who was Guyana's longest-serving Prime Minister and also served briefly as President. Hinds, who spent decades living and working in Linden, currently serves as Ambassador to the United States.

Commissioning the bridge, President Dr Irfaan Ali hailed Ambassador Hinds as a Guyanese who "placed country over personal convenience."

"This bridge will carry thousands of people across the river, but with your name attached to it will carry a story of service, commitment and enduring service to the people of this region," Ali said, speaking directly to Hinds, who was present for the commissioning.

"Sam is a son of the soil in every sense of that expression," he added.

The project also involved the development of two major roadways, one at the Wismar end and the other at the Mackenzie end. Ali announced that these will be named in honour of two other Guyanese leaders: Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips and Robert Corbin, the former Deputy Prime Minister and Opposition Leader who recently passed away.

The President described both men, who hailed from Linden, as distinguished servants of Guyana. Phillips, who is serving his second term as Prime Minister, was Chief of Staff of the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) from 2013 to 2016. He retired with the rank of Brigadier after more than three decades in the military.

*Full Story on Page 21*

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# 80 complete training in dental, pharmacy & more

Eighty (80) healthcare professionals have graduated from five clinical and technical training programmes offered by the Ministry of Health, strengthening Guyana's capacity to deliver specialised care.

The graduates were recognised on Saturday at a ceremony hosted by the ministry's Health Sciences Education Division at Parc Rayne, East Bank Demerara.

The graduating cohort includes 33 pharmacy assistants, 29 dental assistants from the 2025 and 2026 intakes, 12 dental laboratory technicians and six orthotic and prosthetic specialists.

The ceremony marks a significant expansion of Guyana's specialised medical workforce, particularly in rehabilitation and oral care.

Having locally trained orthotic and prosthetic specialists will strengthen the country's ability to provide assistive devices and rehabilitative support for people living with physical disabilities, limb loss and mobility challenges.

Meanwhile, the qualification of 12 dental laboratory technicians follows the revival of the programme after several years. These specialists will assist with restorative dental procedures and produce dental appliances.

The training initiatives reflect the government's push to train medical workers across multiple regions, ensuring that new and upgraded health facilities have qualified staff.



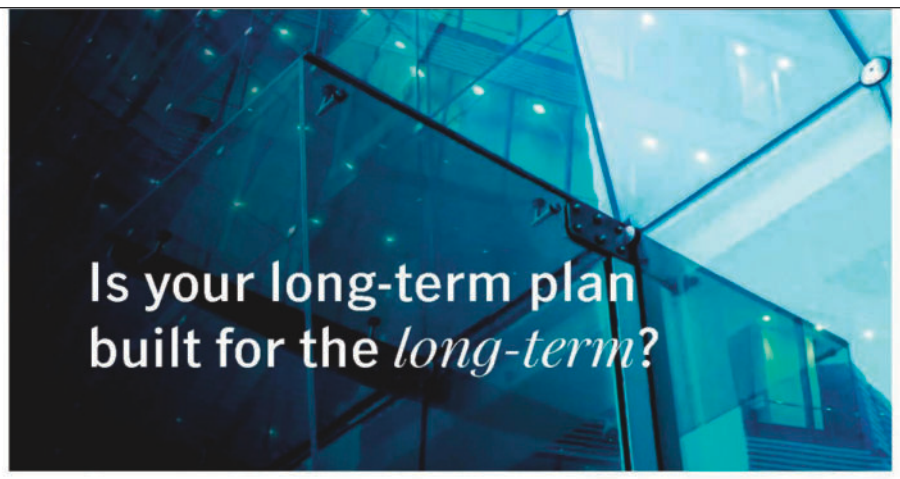

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# "Tribute to Lata Mangeshkar" Song Competition

A new national singing competition is inviting young women across Guyana to step into the spotlight with the songs of the late Lata Mangeshkar.

Geet Sargam is open to female singers aged 14 to 30, and honours the legendary Indian singer known as the Nightingale of India, who died on 6 February 2022. Her career began in 1942, and for more than seven decades her voice carried generations of Hindi films. India awarded her the Bharat Ratna, its highest civilian honour, in 2001.

Guyana has its own memories of her. When she visited in 1980, crowds lined the road from Timehri and her concert at the National Cultural Centre sold out.

"There are wonderful voices in every corner of this country that never get heard," said organiser Dowarka Persaud. "Geet Sargam is about giving them a real stage and keeping this music alive for the next generation."

Entering is free and simple. Singers record a video of a Lata Mangeshkar song, no longer than three minutes, and upload it through the online registration form. They can find the form by scanning the QR code on the competition's flyer and social media pages. Entries close on Sunday, 29 November, at 11:59 p.m.

The judges will review every audition and announce the selected contestants on 1 December. Those singers will then perform with a live band in quarter-finals on 6, 13 and 20 December, followed by semi-finals in January.

The Grand Finale takes place on Saturday, 6 February 2027, five years to the day since Lata Mangeshkar's passing. Twelve finalists will compete for the title.

Lead Organiser Vickram Singh said the competition is only the beginning. "We want Geet Sargam to become a home for young singers long after the final note is sung."

For more information, call or WhatsApp 630-5890 or 735-1331.


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# Canadian firm to produce 5.6M ounces of gold from Guyana mine

A new technical report published by Canadian firm Aris Mining Corporation projects that its Toroparu Gold Project in Guyana will produce 5.6 million ounces of gold over its mine life, while generating an estimated US$21.2 billion in revenue from gold, silver and copper sales.

The Toroparu Project located in Region Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni), is being developed through Aris Mining's local subsidiary, ETK Inc. The project is 100 per cent owned by the Canadian firm.

The November 12 Prefeasibility Study (PFS) outlines a large-scale, long-life open-pit mining operation and records a substantial increase in the project's Mineral Resource Estimate (MRE). Measured and indicated gold resources have risen to 9.3 million ounces, representing a 74 per cent increase compared to the 2025 Preliminary Economic Assessment (PEA), while inferred gold resources increased by 1.4 million ounces, or 115 per cent.

The study projects that the mine will produce 5.6 million ounces of gold over an estimated 29-year processing period, including 21 years of mining. In addition to gold, the project is expected to produce 5.3 million ounces of silver and 235 million pounds (Mlb) of copper over its mine life.

Average annual gold production is estimated at 291,000 ounces during the first five years. During the first 17 years of main pit operations, annual production is expected to average 258,000 ounces, before declining to 103,000 ounces during late-life mining.

The latest projections represent an increase over the 2025 PEA, which outlined a mine life of 21.3 years and projected average annual gold production of 235,000 ounces, yielding approximately 5-million ounces over the mine life, with 4.9 million ounces of silver and 260 million pounds of copper.

Under the new PFS, life-of-mine payable gold revenue is estimated at US$19.9 billion, with a further US$1.3 billion expected from copper and silver by-product sales. These projections are based on assumed metal prices of US$3,600 per ounce of gold, US$50 per ounce of silver and US$5 per pound of copper. The combined projected revenue from the three metals amounts to US$21.2 billion over the life of the project.



The Aris mining project at Toroparu

Meanwhile, the 2025 assessment had projected life-of-mine payable gold sales of US$14.7 billion, based on a gold price of US$3,000 per ounce.

The project is now estimated to contribute US$3 billion in income taxes and US$1.6 billion in royalty payments to the Guyanese Government – a total of US$4.6 billion. The 2025 assessment had projected Guyana receiving approximately US$3.4 billion in taxes and royalties. Aris Mining is party to a Mineral Agreement with the Government of Guyana, which provides for a two-tiered gold royalty structure of 5% on gold sales at prices up to US$1,000 per ounce and 8% on sales at prices above US$1,000 per ounce. The agreement also provides for a 1.5% royalty on sales of copper and other valuable minerals.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Aris Mining, Neil Woodyer, said the latest study positions Toroparu as the company's next major growth project.

He said, "The PFS confirms a large-scale, long-life operation with compelling economics, a substantially larger mineral resource base compared to the 2025 PEA, and a practical development plan designed to reduce execution risk."

Woodyer further noted that the company's large-scale mining licence application was submitted in August and is progressing through the regulatory review process. "We appreciate the constructive engagement with the Government of Guyana and are advancing the technical work required to support our application as we move Toroparu toward development readiness," he said.

Woodyer further explained that the company has also replaced the owner-mining approach contemplated in the 2025 PEA with the use of experienced mining contractors, with costs supported by competitive international quotations.

The initial funding requirement for the project is estimated at US$1.005 billion, including US$102 million in contingency allowances and US$24 million in working capital during construction.

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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

# Darkness as a Weapon

*Editorial from the Guyana Chronicle, November 18 2026*

SIX people are in police custody over what investigators believe was a coordinated plan to attack Guyana's critical infrastructure.

Police say the plan included a second GPL facility in Georgetown, the Umana Yana, and several schools.

According to the police, the aim was to cut the electricity and use the disruption to cause unrest and panic. This should not be read as an ordinary crime story. It describes an alleged attempt to destabilise the Sstate by striking the systems the whole country depends on. The plot deserves to be treated with that level of gravity by the authorities and by the public.

The choice of Good Hope is no accident. It is one of GPL's main substations, and an interconnection point with the Sophia and Columbia substations, linking power transfer between Demerara and Berbice. We already know how fragile the grid is.

When the substation failed after an explosion last December, instability spread across the grid and knocked several other feeders offline. Anyone who wanted to throw the coastland into darkness knew where to aim.

It has happened before, too. In May 2025, two explosions struck the East Ruimveldt Police Outpost and the GPL substation on Mandela Avenue, and investigators treated them as acts of terrorism. Now we have Molotov cocktails at Good Hope. Two attacks on power infrastructure in eighteen months is a pattern. Guyana can no longer act surprised.

The other targets on the alleged list should anger every citizen. The Umana Yana is more than a building; it stands for Indigenous heritage and national identity, and the country has already lost it once, to fire in 2014, before rebuilding it.

Schools are where our children are. Police say one school on the East Coast was targeted three times. A plan that treats classrooms as tools for creating fear has crossed a line that no grievance can justify.

The security response so far deserves credit. CCTV caught the attackers, suspects were found, and detention was extended through the High Court instead of quietly stretched past the constitutional limit.

That is how it should work. But the harder work starts now. A country whose oil wealth has made it a regional prize cannot leave substations protected by chain-link fences and luck.

GPL needs proper perimeter security, constant monitoring, and backup routes for power at critical nodes. Schools and national monuments need better protection too. Resilience is no longer an engineering wish list; it is a national security matter.

Here a warning is needed. The search of MP Natasha Singh-Lewis's home and her questioning have pulled this investigation into politics.

She was released, and she has not been charged in this matter, but her husband, who was also held, reportedly remains in custody. In a country with Guyana's history, that matters a great deal. If the plot had political motives, the evidence will prove it in court, with names, charges and proof.

The police must move from detention to charges as quickly as the evidence allows, and give the public as much information as they can without harming the case. Political leaders on every side must condemn the plot without reservation. Citizens must stay alert.

Someone wanted Guyana in the dark and afraid. The right answer is a country that is calm, alert and united, and that expects justice to be done openly.

# BK Group is a key contributor to Guyana's development

Dear Editor,

THE extraordinary economic transformation taking place in Guyana today under the current government coupled with the country's glorious journey into global economic prominence began with the historic offshore oil discovery by ExxonMobil a decade ago.

As the country modernises at a record pace, the demand for robust infrastructure, improved transportation and communication networks and modern public facilities has become paramount to the nation's prosperity.

In this period of accelerated national growth and development, Mr. Brian Tiwari, CCM, AA, founder and Executive Chairman of BK Group of Companies has stood out as one of the principal contributors to Guyana's economic success dating back to the turn of the century.

As Guyana's largest privately-owned civil engineering and construction firm, the BK Group of Companies through its key subsidiaries like BK International, BK Quarries, Jags Aviation and BK Supermix to name a few, is actively building the structural foundation of the country's rapidly modernising infrastructure.

Owner of the largest stone quarry in Guyana, producing and supplying more than half of the country's first-grade stone aggregates needs and precision-grade sand and concrete to build vital highways, sea defenses, schools and bridges etc, BK group has become the backbone of Guyana's rapid economic, infrastructural development and transformation of the local economy.

Furthermore, the construction of the massive airport terminal in Bartica, demonstrates the company's commitment to invest in regional growth and development with the aim to connect the interior region to the coastal belt.

The combination of national development capability and the skillful and superb execution of major projects by BK Group of Companies proved that Mr. Brian Tiwari aka BK is indisputably one of the most prominent, recognisable devoted, authentic and successful business leaders in the country.

Founded over 40 years ago, BK International now BK Group of Companies is a pioneering enterprise that has grown to become the leading and most flourishing infrastructure and construction conglomerate in Guyana and perhaps the Caribbean.

Through his visionary, remarkable and groundbreaking leadership, Mr. Tiwari has spent decades rebuilding and upgrading Guyana's infrastructural landscape and effectively executing the country's most critical civil engineering and public works projects.

His contribution to Guyana's infrastructural development and economic growth has been the cornerstone of the country's future.

With unmatched expertise, operational capability and technical depth, BK Group of Companies was recently selected as the preferred bidder and was awarded the highly critical and largest marine contract in the country to salvage and recover the state-operated ferry, the MV Barima from the ocean floor near the Pomeroon and Barbaroon River areas on the Essequibo Coast. Several news outlets have estimated that the ship is about 20 to 30 feet underwater.

Some have concluded that this monumental undertaking highlights the elite engineering, modern marine technology and heavy-duty marine capabilities that only Mr. Tiwarie and his company can mobilize.

To salvage and preserve the vessel as a cohesive unit for forensic examination and audit as mandated by the Marine Administration Department (MARAD), the BK Group plans to execute a non-destructive salvage operation to raise the sunken 87-year-old state-owned ferry.

It will deploy its largest fleet of heavy-duty marine assets, including specialised salvage cranes, heavyweight and durable tugs, stabilisation boats, skilled divers, and an elite group of engineers. With the right expertise and proper marine equipment and exemplary and outstanding human skills, the BK Group of Companies headed by the genius, Mr. Brian Tiwari, will successfully salvage the MV Barima.

Sincerely, Dr. Asquith Rose

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# 2026 Budget gives financial boost to lower-income families

**By Milan Maharaj**
LJI REPORTER



**The 2027 Groceries Benefit will be a one-time payment for low-income families**

The federal government proposes to implement a one-time boost in groceries and essential benefits for 12 million Canadians, as well as new measures regulating foreign home purchases that would help to spur building of new homes.

The announcement made by Finance Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne and Housing Minister Gregor Robertson on Nov. 16 is part of the government's 2026 budget. It is supposed to add to the financial assistance provided to lower-income families and promote home building and ownership.

The first measure will be the introduction of the 2027 Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit Supplement, which will be a one-time payment to qualifying individuals and families in 2027. The supplement will be an addition to the benefit by 50 per cent in the 2026-27 fiscal year, which will require an extra $4.1 billion from the federal government.

As stated by the Department of Finance, a single individual without children would get $339 under the 2027 Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit Supplement, and a couple with two children would get $679.

With a top-up in June 2026 and a 25 percent increase in the existing benefits in July, the total benefits for 2026-27 benefit year can be around $1,290 for an individual without children and $2,570 for couples with two children.

According to the government, the extra benefits will benefit more than 12 million people and 120,000 Canadians will get out of poverty in 2027. These are the estimated numbers given by the government of Canada.

It would assist families in coping with their grocery bill and other expenses as the cost of living is creating difficulties for many families. However, this payment is an increase in the financial aid provision and not in reducing the costs of food and house items.

The second initiative of the government is regarding the foreign buyer ban in Canada, which is in place since January 2023.

Restrictions on the purchases of residential real estate properties are set to be prolonged for another two years, until Jan. 1, 2029. Meanwhile, Ottawa is planning to start a regulatory process allowing foreign investors to buy new residential properties without being restricted by the prohibition.

This amendment would permit buying newly built residential properties for foreigners with keeping restrictions on purchasing second-hand properties.

According to the government, the decision will allow the majority of the housing market to be at the disposal of Canadians while attracting investments in constructions of new houses.

The exemption would direct foreign investments into the construction of new homes. However, there are still many details unknown – for example, what exactly would be considered new residential properties, and from what period of time would the new rules work.

As long as regulations have not been adopted, existing restrictions are still valid. There has not been a particular day set for implementation of the exemption as yet.

The move comes despite ongoing controversy surrounding the impact of foreign purchasers on affordability in the market. According to Global News, as much as 2.62 per cent of all residential properties in Canada were owned by non-residents in 2024. These numbers cannot reveal how much the current ban has affected housing prices and the market has been affected by other variables such as interest rates and housing supply.

This initiative forms part of a broader federal housing plan set out in Budget 2026. In this budget, the government has set aside close to $45 billion for housing investments over 11 years, where the government plans to increase affordable and non-market housing supply, construction and end homelessness within the decade.

The government will be working together with the provinces to lower the taxes, fees, and development charges associated with building new homes. According to the federal government, these policies may lower the cost of buying a new house by up to $200,000 in Ontario.

Finance Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne stated that the policies would help Canadians put money back into their wallets, protect their ability to own a home and invest in new constructions.

While the grocery support is likely to be the source of direct financial support early next year, the impacts of the measures relating to housing will have to wait until additional legislation is enacted. The impacts of such will be seen based on how much additional funding will result in new constructions and lower prices.

These are two areas in which households will spend money, and while their impacts can only be assessed at a later date.



# New purchasing system to lower meat, egg prices, protect farmers –President Ali announces

PRESIDENT, Dr Irfaan Ali has announced plans to establish a coordinated purchasing system for eggs, chicken, beef and mutton.

The system aims to reduce food prices for Guyanese consumers, while ensuring that farmers receive fair and predictable returns.

During a meeting on Friday morning with producers, distributors, retailers and suppliers at State House in Georgetown, the president outlined a comprehensive strategy to address rising food costs by eliminating inefficiencies in purchasing, transportation and storage and distribution, while simultaneously expanding domestic agricultural production.

He emphasised that reducing food prices must not come at the expense of local farmers.

"Cheaper food must not come from squeezing the farmer. It must come from taking unnecessary costs out of the system and producing more," the president stated.

Under the proposed system, the government will consolidate demand from schools, hospitals and other public institutions, creating larger and more predictable orders for agricultural producers. Wholesalers and retailers will also be allowed to participate voluntarily.

According to the president, the current fragmented purchasing system creates uncertainty for farmers and buyers, resulting in higher financing, storage and transportation costs that are ultimately passed on to consumers

The new arrangement will establish clearer purchasing volumes, quality standards and delivery schedules, thereby allowing producers to plan more effectively while reducing unnecessary costs. The president made it clear that the initiative does not represent a government takeover of farms or retail businesses.

Farmers will remain free to sell outside the programme, while retailers can continue purchasing through their existing channels.

A key feature of the initiative will be measures to ensure consumers directly benefit from lower wholesale prices. Retailers participating in the programme will be required to adhere to transparent maximum mark-ups, clearly display programme prices and report quantities sold.

The government will also introduce a regularly published price dashboard showing wholesale prices, retail prices and the savings delivered to consumers in each region. The president said the system will be judged primarily by its impact on household food bills.

The president also announced safeguards to protect farmers from unfair pricing and procurement practices.

He further noted that contracts will not be awarded solely on the lowest price offered. Instead, consideration will be given to verified and efficient production costs, product quality and reliable delivery.

Where appropriate, multi-cycle purchasing commitments will be introduced to provide farmers with greater certainty when investing in production. Small farmers will be able to participate individually or through co-operatives and producer groups.

The president further committed to transparent contract awards, independent audits and firm payment deadlines to prevent farmers from facing lengthy delays after supplying their products.


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# Guyana-US defence pact does not authorise shooting down of aircraft

GUYANA'S recently signed defence partnership with the United States does not provide for the shooting down of aircraft suspected of involvement in narcotrafficking, President, Dr Irfaan Ali has clarified, emphasising that the agreement instead focuses on intelligence sharing, surveillance and strengthening the country's capacity to intercept criminal threats within its airspace.

Addressing questions surrounding the agreement signed at the Pentagon in Washington, DC, the president explained that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) provides for greater collaboration between the two countries in intelligence gathering, military training and efforts to combat transnational crime, including narcotrafficking.

Speaking to members of the media on Friday, the head of state stressed that while the partnership is aimed at strengthening Guyana's ability to monitor and respond to suspicious aircraft and activities, such operations remain subject to established rules.

He was keen to emphasise that the agreement should not be interpreted as authorising the shooting down of aircraft.



Pete Hesgeth and Dr Ali sign the defence pact

"In relation to what we signed with the United States, that MoU speaks to collaboration and partnership in training and sharing of information, intelligence gathering, in working together to combat transnational crime, which include narco-trafficking. I cannot say to you that the agreements speak about shooting down any plane. There are rules governing those things," President Ali said.

Dr Ali explained that the arrangement would strengthen the country's ability to secure its airspace by enhancing surveillance capabilities and facilitating a more coordinated response when suspicious activities are detected.

Beyond identifying and tracking unauthorised overflights, the partnership is expected to enhance the capacity of the relevant authorities to intercept aircraft and pursue individuals involved in illicit activities, ultimately bringing them before the justice system.

"But what I can say is that agreements speak about collaboration in ensuring that we keep our airspace as secure as possible, that beyond monitoring of the overflights, we can have the ability to intercept and to work on bringing these narco-criminals and other transnational criminals to justice," he said.

The clarification comes just weeks after Guyana and the United States signed a Joint Declaration for an Enhanced Defence Partnership at the Pentagon, marking another significant milestone in the countries' long-standing security relationship and efforts to strengthen regional defence co-operation.

President Ali, who signed the declaration alongside United States Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, underscored the importance both countries place on safeguarding Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while responding to emerging security threats across the Western Hemisphere.

Under the arrangement, the United States has committed to providing sustained defence expertise, multi-domain training and combined military exercises with the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), supporting the country's efforts to develop a more modern and strategic defence architecture.

The partnership also seeks to strengthen Guyana's air-domain awareness, particularly its ability to monitor, deter and respond to threats within and around its territory. Additionally, the agreement builds on existing co-operation between the two countries in confronting narco-terrorist organisations and dismantling narco-trafficking networks.

The enhanced partnership reflects a broader regional push to strengthen security co-operation among countries confronting organised criminal networks whose activities transcend national borders.

President Ali has consistently maintained that stronger security partnerships are necessary to address the evolving challenges facing the Region.






**It was a proud moment for women in STEM, international collaboration**

# Guyana universities shine on world stage at event at McMaster

GUYANA'S universities were in the spotlight on Wednesday, November 11, as student researchers Aravi Shanmugalingam and Aliya Bacchus presented at the Master of Public Health Student-Led Conference at McMaster University, one of Canada's top universities.

Both are members of an international team that spans seven institutions in five countries and is led by the School of Medicine at the Rajiv Gandhi University of Science and Technology (RGUST) and the College of Medical Sciences at the University of Guyana.

According to a press release, each presented her own research poster at the conference, themed "Pathways to Prevention: Protecting Health Across the Lifespan." Organisers said they were delighted to welcome research from South America and the Caribbean, voices the event rarely gets to hear.

The posters shared early findings from two studies within the team's research on occupational health. This area of research looks at the link between work and health, and at what helps people stay healthy, motivated and fulfilled in their jobs, the release said.

It added that Aravi's study explored these questions in Delhi, India, while Aliya's brought the focus closer to home, to the Caribbean. The work is ongoing, and the team expects to share its full findings by mid-2027.

Aravi and Aliya took different roads to McMaster, but both roads run through Guyana.

Aravi, a Tamil-Canadian, chose Guyana to pursue her dream of becoming a physician. She is a medical student at RGUST in Georgetown.

"Standing beside my poster, I thought about how far this journey has taken me," Aravi said according to the release. "Guyana welcomed me as a medical student, and sharing our team's work internationally felt like a way of giving something back. It is a moment I will always treasure."

Meanwhile, Aliya, a Guyanese-Canadian, is studying for her Master of Public Health at McMaster. For her, sharing work built with universities in Guyana, the land of her roots, was especially meaningful.

"Being part of a team with such strong roots in Guyana means the world to me," Aliya said. "Presenting our work here felt like bringing two parts of my life together. I'm so grateful to everyone who made it possible."

The release added that alongside RGUST's School of Medicine and the University of Guyana's College of Medical Sciences, the team draws on collaborators at Sharda University in India, Wilfrid Laurier University and McMaster University in Canada, Amberton University in the United States, and the International Executive School in Strasbourg, France. Its members include Professor (Dr) Jimmy Naipaul, Professor (Dr) Rajini Kurup, Professor (Dr) Khagendra Nath Gangai, Dr Rita Persaud and Professor (Dr) Tejroi Naipaul.

The collaboration reflects a shared commitment by RGUST and the University of Guyana to deepen their global connections, engage Guyanese academics across the diaspora and strengthen homegrown research as the country continues to grow. For Professor Jimmy Naipaul of RGUST's School of Medicine, the day was a proud milestone.

"Today belongs to Aravi and Aliya, and we are incredibly proud of them," Prof. Jimmy Naipaul said. "Guyanese scholars are making their mark all over the world, and many are eager to give back. By bringing them together with colleagues at home and collaborators across the Caribbean and beyond, we open up a wealth of knowledge for our students. Seeing a medical student from RGUST and a Guyanese-Canadian student from McMaster each presenting internationally tells us this vision is working."

The release added that Professor (Dr) Persaud, an assistant professor at Wilfrid Laurier University, gave the conference's opening presentation on suicide prevention. She saw the occasion as a celebration of women's empowerment.

"It is heartwarming to see young women like Aravi and Aliya presenting their research with such confidence before an international audience," Dr Persaud said adding, "When women are given the opportunity and support to lead, they excel and lift others up with them. I hope every girl in Guyana sees this and knows that her voice and her ambitions belong in science and beyond."

Professor (Dr) Gangai of Sharda University in India saw the day as proof of what international teamwork can achieve.

"Good research travels far when it is built on strong collaboration," Professor (Dr) Gangai said. "Working with colleagues across five countries has been a joy, and it is rewarding to see young researchers share our work."

# Guyana's climate leadership takes centre stage at COP31

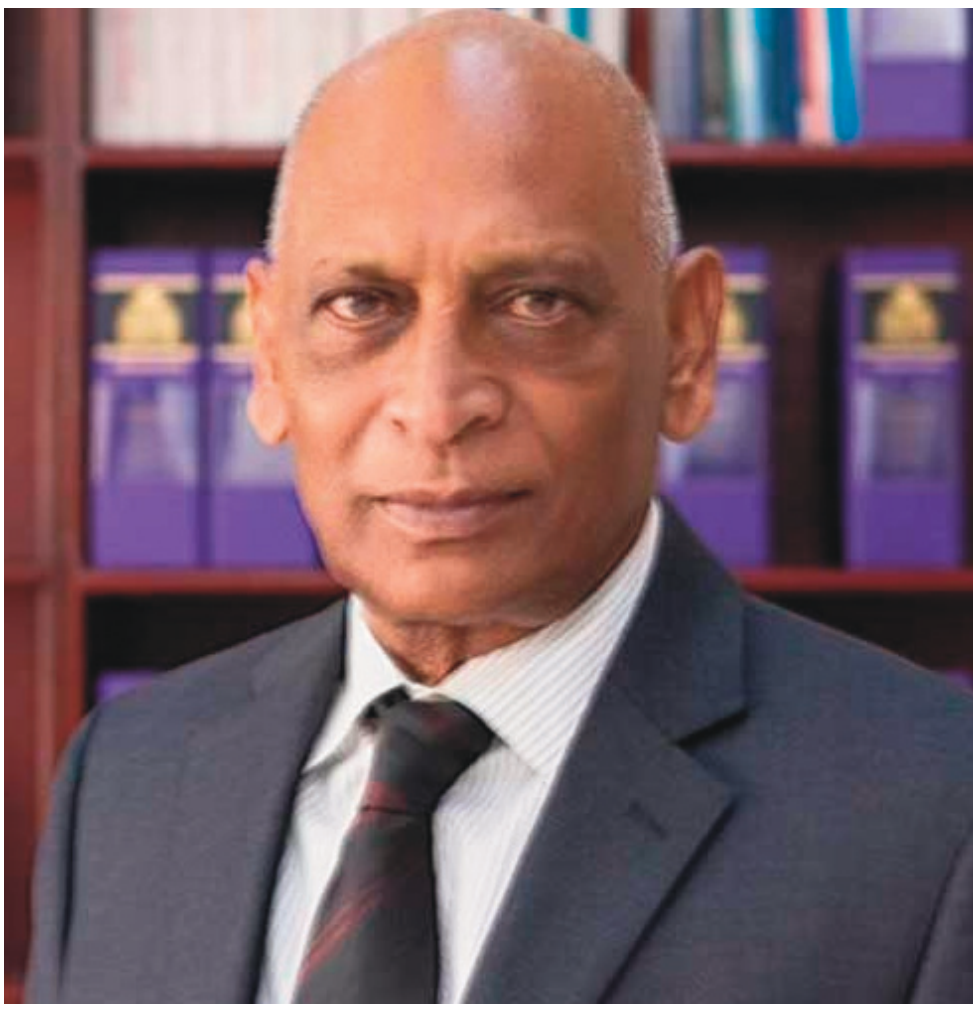
GUYANA'S Vice-President, Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, has challenged world leaders to move beyond repeated climate commitments and take concrete action to address global warming, deforestation and environmental degradation, warning that the gap between international promises and implementation continues to undermine efforts to protect the planet.

The call was highlighted by Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland, Dr Leslie Ramsammy, in a public commentary dated November 14, following the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31), held in Antalya, Türkiye.

Ramsammy said Jagdeo, who led Guyana's delegation, delivered a strong message to climate negotiators that the international community must prioritise implementation over continued discussions, particularly as vulnerable countries face increasingly severe consequences from climate change.

He argued that Guyana's experience demonstrates that meaningful climate action is possible, pointing to the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), conceived and implemented under Jagdeo's leadership, and the Global Biodiversity Alliance, championed by President Dr Irfaan Ali, as examples of initiatives that could inform international efforts.

According to Ramsammy, while successive climate conferences have generated ambitious declarations and commitments since the first COP in Berlin in 1995, tangible achievements have consistently fallen short of the promises made.



**Dr Leslie Ramsammy**

He described the international response as one characterised by repeated assurances, with implementation progressing far too slowly to match the urgency of the climate crisis.

At COP31, Jagdeo urged negotiators not to abandon efforts to secure more ambitious climate commitments, particularly those designed to assist developing and vulnerable countries in adapting to the effects of global warming.

He also emphasised the importance of the United Nations principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, which recognises that countries have different historical contributions to climate change and varying capacities to address it.

However, the Vice-President maintained that such commitments must translate into practical measures rather than remain on negotiating tables.

A major area of concern was the implementation of the Forest Finance Roadmap, which outlines six financing options intended to support forest-rich countries, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Among the mechanisms highlighted were the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF) and jurisdictional carbon markets, which allow countries to generate carbon credits based on verified reductions in emissions across defined geographical areas.

Jagdeo called on countries to accelerate the implementation of these financing arrangements, while urging governments to pass legislation supporting the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), open compliance carbon markets and operationalise Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

These measures, he argued, are important to ensuring that countries protecting their forests and reducing emissions can access the financing needed to sustain those efforts.

The Vice-President also addressed the global energy transition, referencing the COP28 agreement to transition away from fossil fuels.

He cautioned that reducing dependence on fossil fuels must go hand in hand with the development and expansion of renewable energy sources, increased electrification and the adoption of emerging technologies. His proposed approach included reducing fossil fuel production and consumption, expanding renewable energy generation, accelerating electrification and curbing deforestation.

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

**World Guyanese Congress**
5200 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M2N 5P6

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

If you have any questions feel free to get in touch:
Email: mail@wgc-org.com
Telephone: 1-800-317-0804

# 30 British business representatives to visit Guyana on trade mission

APPROXIMATELY 30 British business representatives are expected to visit Guyana later this month on a trade mission to strengthen commercial partnerships and expand investment opportunities across several sectors.

The delegation's visit forms part of activities organised by the British Chamber of Commerce Guyana (BritCham-Guyana), including a Gala Dinner on November 25, as Guyana celebrates its 60th Independence Anniversary.

During a press conference at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel on Friday, Guyana's Chief Investment Officer, Dr Peter Ramsaroop, said Guyana has welcomed thousands of companies from around the world over the past six years, benefitting from knowledge transfer, improved services and new business opportunities.

He emphasised the need for greater collaboration that allows Guyanese businesses to participate in international projects and partnerships and challenged local businesses to look beyond attracting foreign investors and pursue opportunities to establish themselves in overseas markets.




**Chief Investment Officer, Dr Peter Ramsaroop (l) with a British team**

Dr Ramsaroop also encouraged local businesses to capitalise on the £3.5 billion in financing opportunities available through UK Export Finance, noting that stronger partnerships could help expand Guyana's manufacturing, agro-processing and other productive sectors.

Deputy British High Commissioner UK-Guyana, Liam McShane, said the incoming trade mission will connect British companies with Guyanese businesses and stakeholders, particularly in areas where UK expertise can support the country's development priorities.

McShane highlighted opportunities in transport, aviation, urban development and infrastructure, noting that stronger commercial relationships can generate employment, improve services and facilitate knowledge transfer.

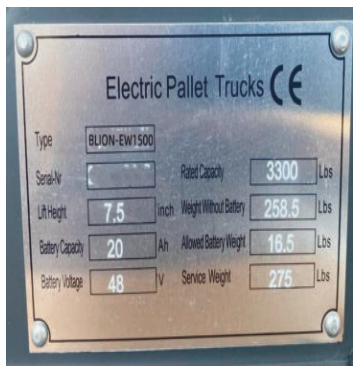
Khan noted that the mission will provide opportunities for direct engagement between businesses from both countries. He remarked that the chamber has been instrumental in strengthening UK-Guyana commercial relations, including supporting opportunities for trade and investment.

The visiting delegation will include representatives from companies operating in energy, construction, engineering, healthcare, digitalisation, transport, shipping and professional services.

Confirmed speakers for the Gala include Minister of Finance, Dr Ashni Singh; Dr Ramsaroop; British High Commissioner to Guyana, Joseph Fisher and ExxonMobil Guyana President, Alistar Routledge, among others.

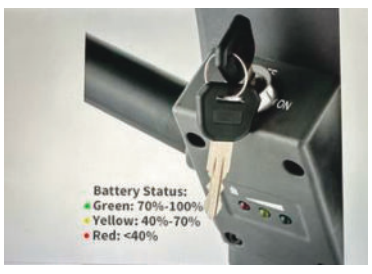
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# President Ali vows decisive action against anyone seeking to destabilise Guyana

PRESIDENT, Dr Irfaan Ali has declared that Guyana's security agencies, working alongside international partners, are confident of dismantling any network or individuals seeking to destabilise the country, vowing that they would "crush" all actors who threaten the state or its citizens.

Dr Ali made the comments during a press conference on Friday, when he was questioned about intelligence pointing to the alleged presence of the Venezuelan criminal network Tren de Aragua in Guyana and whether authorities had uncovered details of its local operations and connections.

"What I can tell you is that the intelligence sources and intelligence agencies, in collaboration with our partners, have provided credible information," the president said.

"That there is an engagement with actors that [sic] are not safe for a country, and part of the criminal network that you have alluded to."

He declined to disclose further details, explaining that he had to be careful not to expose intelligence sources. However, he expressed confidence in the country's security arrangements and its co-operation with international partners.

Dr Ali said, "I will stop there because we are working on intelligence gathered and information gathered, and we are confident. What I can tell you is that we are confident that our systems and our partnership would allow us to crush, to crush, to crush all actors who seek to destabilise and or harm our state or any citizen."

Earlier in the press conference, the president was asked whether investigators had made any progress following an arrest connected to that alleged plot, particularly in identifying the financiers, masterminds and other persons believed to be behind it.

The question related to the November 10 firebombing of the Guyana Power and Light (GPL) Good Hope, East Coast Demerara Distribution Substation, which President Ali subsequently linked to a possible wider, coordinated plot to destabilise Guyana. The police reported that one suspect had been taken into custody, and three others were being sought. Information obtained during questioning allegedly suggested that two people carried out the attack, while two others were involved in planning and coordinating it. Investigators also recovered a motorcycle believed to have been used in the incident.

Dr Ali said he was receiving regular briefings and was satisfied with the progress being made by the investigative team. "I can say to you that I'm very confident, given our investment in security, our partnership with international agencies and the extraordinary work of the team that is doing the investigation," he added.

He described the progress as rapid, adding that investigators had access to tools that were assisting them in carrying out their work.

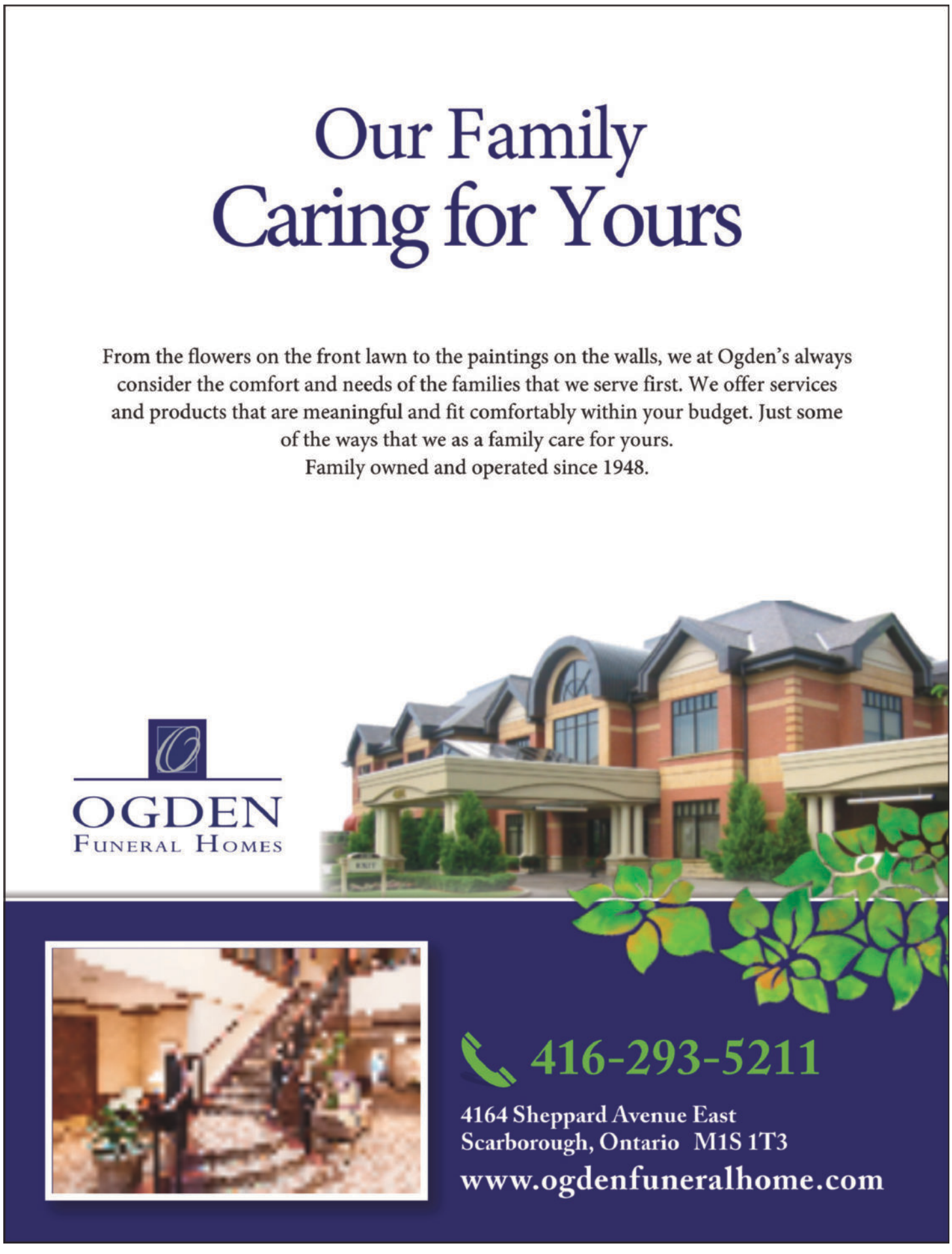
"I would say, I would consider it rapid progress in a very short time," he said, before assuring reporters that authorities were making "enormous progress" and would get to the bottom of the matter "very soon".

The head of state did not identify the individuals or organisations allegedly involved, disclose the specific intelligence gathered or elaborate on the suspected links to Tren de Aragua.

Tren de Aragua is Venezuela's most powerful and far-reaching criminal organisation. The organisation emerged in the early 2010s as a prison gang in the Tocorón penitentiary in the Venezuelan state of Aragua, but grew into a transnational organisation with operations across South America.

In a national security address delivered on November 12, President Ali disclosed that intelligence agencies were investigating what he described as a possible centrally coordinated conspiracy targeting individuals, public and private properties, essential services and national security.

The address followed the November 10 firebombing of GPL's Good Hope Distribution Substation.





The crowd cheers during the Secretary-General's meeting with civil society at the UN Climate Conference in Antalya, Türkiye

# Polluters must pay for climate change

FROM emotional appeals for climate justice to high-stakes negotiations over billions of dollars, finance dominated discussions at COP31 on Friday. UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned that even tripling adaptation funding for vulnerable countries would meet less than a third of their needs, as pressure mounted on wealthy nations and major polluters to pay their fair share.

Some demonstrators held signs demanding that "polluters pay". Others, dressed as chefs, offered a recipe for climate action: debt cancellation as the secret ingredient.

Along the corridors and waterways of the COP31 venue in Antalya, protesters from across the globe gathered to demand climate justice. Some fought back tears, while others wept openly, recounting the lives and livelihoods already lost to climate change.

Speaking of Lake Chad, where drought and fluctuating water levels have devastated communities and displaced families, a Nigerian activist questioned why his country, which has contributed little to global emissions, faces far higher borrowing costs than wealthier nations to cope with climate impacts.

Similar concerns echoed through Friday's finance discussions, as the Secretary-General warned that climate disasters were erasing decades of development gains and pushing vulnerable countries deeper into debt.

"Even tripling adaptation finance would meet less than 30 per cent of what is needed," he told journalists at his final COP press conference as Secretary-General before leaving office at the end of the year.

The consequences, he argued, extend far beyond the environment.

"You cannot build peace on a burning planet," he said. "You cannot eradicate poverty when climate disasters keep throwing people back into it."

Climate action, he insisted, must remain central to the UN's work, requiring a faster transition away from fossil fuels and a challenge to the "powerful interests" standing in the way.

"The future of our planet cannot be negotiated on the terms of those profiting from its destruction."

But finding the money to protect vulnerable countries is another battle. The UN chief revealed that he had met with the heads of international climate funds earlier on Friday, urging them to cut through the bureaucracy that makes financial assistance so difficult to access, particularly for countries with limited resources.

He also questioned the fairness of a global financial system designed after the Second World War, when many developing countries had little say in shaping it.

Changing that system, he argued, could also help unlock more funding. A dollar invested in the capital of a development bank, for example, could generate eight to ten dollars in financing, while greater use of guarantees could attract private investment.

At a ministerial meeting, UN climate chief, Simon Stiell, described the consequences of leaving things as they are.

"Many developing countries are trapped in a downward loop of debt, disaster, and devastating capital costs," he said. "Climate finance must help countries break free."

Under existing agreements, developed countries are expected to lead efforts to mobilise at least $300 billion a year for developing nations by 2035, as part of a broader $1.3 trillion goal.

But an assessment highlighted at COP31 suggests that, on current trends, annual climate finance could fall $840 billion short of that larger target.

Fresh efforts to close the gap emerged on Friday. Development finance institutions from Britain, Norway and Canada announced plans to mobilise $10 billion for climate projects in emerging markets by 2030.

For millions of farmers, climate finance can mean the difference between adapting to a changing climate and losing everything when disaster strikes.

Kaveh Zahedi, from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), told UN News that only around five per cent of climate-related development finance goes to agriculture, and that share is declining.

Yet investing in adaptation can help farmers restore degraded land, use water more efficiently and grow crops better able to withstand droughts and floods, as increasingly unpredictable weather and El Niño are threatening food production.

"The biggest risk is not investing in agriculture," he warned. "Because then you're risking food insecurity. You're risking an increase in hunger."

But even with better preparation, some disasters cannot be avoided. And when they strike, how quickly money arrives can make all the difference.

Imagine a farmer in Fiji whose fields have just been battered by a cyclone. The crops are gone; bills remain. And the next harvest may be months away.

An innovative insurance scheme is helping farmers recover without waiting for lengthy damage assessments.

Known as parametric insurance, it provides payouts when predefined conditions, such as wind speed or rainfall, are reached.

Sinja Buri, from the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, explained why speed matters.

"The longer it takes for him to receive support, the longer it will take to recover. And the costs will even be higher," she said.

The programme operates across eight Pacific countries, with tens of thousands of people benefiting so far.

But tackling climate change is not just about spending money.

"Climate action is a good investment and it is profitable," Hunter Lovins, founder of the NGO Natural Capitalism Solutions, told UN News.

*— courtesy UN*

# AG hails judicial improvements, lower caseload at High Court

ATTORNEY-General and Minister of Legal Affairs Anil Nandlall, SC, has praised improvements in the handling of criminal cases at the High Court, pointing to 150 cases listed for trial at the Demerara Assizes with six judges assigned.

This figure represents an average of 25 cases per judge. Nandlall described this development as the most favourable ratio in the High Court in four decades, saying that the figures reflected a decline in cases alongside an increase in the number of assigned judges.

"This is the most impressive ratio that we have ever had in the High Court over the last 40 years. I think I can say so without the fear of being contradicted. For the last four decades, we have not had this type of statistics. 150 cases, six judges assigned, which means that you will have 25 cases per judge. This is a remarkable accomplishment," the Attorney-General said.

He contrasted the November 2026 caseload with earlier assizes. In 2019, he said, three judges were assigned 260 cases in January, approximately 87 each and 322 cases in October, or roughly 107 per judge.

Nandlall also cited figures of 259 cases and three judges in January 2024, and 183 cases shared among six judges in October 2024. For 2025, he referred to 134 cases and six judges at one assize, and 143 cases with four judges at another.

He attributed the changes to investment in the judicial sector, including more judges, staff, equipment, software and infrastructure, as well as co-operation between the executive and the judiciary.

He said the improvements were helping speed the disposal of both criminal and civil cases, describing the difference from previous years as "chalk to cheese".



**Attorney General Anil Nandlall SC**

Nandlall commended the judiciary for the progress, while asserting that, as minister responsible for legal affairs and justice, he was entitled to both praise and criticise it. The remarks were made during a meeting on legal updates and judicial improvements.

"It also goes to show the investments that the government has made in the sector, the judicial sector, capital investments in personnel, in equipment, software program, etc., infrastructural development, and of course the investment in human resources," he said, adding:

"We have more judges now in the High Court and in the Court of Appeal than we have ever had in the history of Guyana. So, a joint effort between the executive and the judiciary is producing these transformational results."

The cases encompass a range of serious offences, including murder, conspiracy to commit murder, attempted murder, accessory after the fact of murder, manslaughter, unlawful wounding, felonious wounding, wounding with intent, sexual offences, explosion to endanger life or property, and trafficking in narcotics.

Acting Chief Justice Navindra Singh will preside over Panel One, while Justice Sherdel Isaacs-Marcus has been assigned to Panel Two and Justice Jacqueline Josiah-Graham to Panel Three.

Justice Zamilla Ally-Seepaul will preside over Panel Four, Justice Renita Singh will head Panel Five, while Justice Sunil Scarce has been assigned to Panel Six at the Sexual Offences Court.

The assignment of six judicial panels is part of the judiciary's efforts to improve the efficiency of criminal proceedings and reduce the time accused persons spend awaiting trial.

According to the judiciary, the expansion of trial panels through the appointment of additional judges has contributed to improvements in the handling of cases, helping to shorten waiting periods and strengthen the timely resolution of serious criminal matters.

# Guyana moves to double agricultural production

THE Government of Guyana, through the Ministry of Agriculture, is moving aggressively to double agricultural production across the country, reduce dependence on food imports and significantly expand exports to regional markets, positioning Guyana as a major contributor to the Caribbean's food-security agenda.

Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha, has outlined an ambitious production drive targeting key sectors, including rice, poultry, corn, soya, fruits and vegetables, while expressing optimism that the country could eliminate onion imports as early as the first quarter of 2027.

During an interview with the Guyana Chronicle in Berbice, Mustapha said the government is looking to build on the substantial gains recorded in the agricultural sector over the past six years.

"We want to launch a programme to ramp up production across the country, although we have seen production increase in almost all the sectors from 2020 to now," he stated.

The minister explained that the expansion is intended not only to satisfy domestic demand, but also to position Guyana as a net food exporter to the Caribbean.

"We want to double it because we are not only producing for local consumption, but we also want to be a food producer, we want to be a net exporter to the Region, and we have to take in most of the slacks that will be created when the reduction of the food-import bill come into effect by 2030; if we have to be successful, then Guyana has to be successful and I think we sure moving in the right direction."

Providing an update on the Regional Food Hub currently under construction at Yarrowkabra, along the Soesdyke-Linden Highway, Mustapha said the facility is expected to be completed by June 2027.

Phase One of the project commenced in 2023, while in July 2025, the government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Blumberg Grain and Logistics. Upon completion, the facility is expected to meet international standards and support Guyana's ambitions of becoming a major regional food supplier.

Meanwhile, Mustapha expressed confidence in the country's ability to achieve greater self-sufficiency in several agricultural commodities, particularly onions, corn and soya.

"I am hoping by the first quarter of next year we will stop importing all the onions we used to import into our country, I am hoping that also the corn and soya production will increase, we will not import any, we have started exporting to Barbados already," he said. The poultry industry has also recorded substantial growth, with production increasing from 41,000 metric tonnes to 91,000 metric tonnes in 2025, representing an increase of approximately 122 per cent.

With recent investments in modern tunnel-ventilated poultry pens, the minister anticipates that production will surpass 100,000 metric tonnes by the end of 2026.

# Guyana's fifth FPSO hits first oil

THE Government of Guyana, on Monday, announced the achievement of first oil from the Errea Wittu Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel.

According to a Ministry of Natural Resources press release, this marks the startup of the Uaru Development, the fifth offshore development in the Stabroek Block.

Errea Wittu, a Warrau word meaning "abundance," will produce oil under the Uaru Petroleum Production Licence granted on April 27, 2023, the release said, adding that the vessel was built by MODEC, representing the first facility by the Japanese shipbuilder in Guyana. It will be located approximately 200 kilometres offshore Guyana, has a storage capacity of approximately two million barrels of crude oil and is constructed on a newbuild hull and moored using a SOFEC spread mooring system.

Its topsides are designed to handle up to 540 million cubic feet of associated gas per day and support water injection of up to 350,000 barrels per day.

"Errea Wittu follows the Liza Destiny, Liza Unity, Prosperity and ONE GUYANA FPSOs. The vessel will produce approximately 250,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) and will add to Guyana's total daily crude output which is expected to rise from just over 900,000 bpd to approximately 1.15 million bpd. It will combine development of the Snoek, Mako and Uaru resources with production from 44 production and injection wells across up to 10 drill centres," the release said.

The commencement of production from the Errea Wittu marks another important milestone in the expansion of Guyana's petroleum sector as it reflects the continued growth of the industry and its increasing contribution towards national development.




**The Errea Wittu Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel**

The ministry emphasised that as the sector expands, the benefits extend beyond increased oil production and revenues. "It represents greater investment in greater investment across key sectors of the economy, employment opportunities for Guyanese, increased participation of local businesses and the growth of other industries. These developments will continue to create new opportunities and support Guyana's long-term development."

Further, the release said the Government of Guyana congratulates the Stabroek Block licence holders on this significant achievement and remains committed to the prudent management of the country's petroleum resources.

Through the Ministry of Natural Resources, the government will continue to ensure that the sector's development is guided by sound management with sustainable development and responsible environmental stewardship remaining a priority for the long-term benefit of the Guyanese people, it added.

Meanwhile, ExxonMobil Guyana in making a similar announcement said Guyana's installed production capacity has now risen to 1.1 million barrels per day.

"The startup of Errea Wittu is another major milestone for Guyana and ExxonMobil," said ExxonMobil Upstream Company President, Dan Ammann.

"In just over a decade, Guyana has become one of the world's fastest growing and most important new sources of energy supply. Reaching 1.1 million barrels per day of installed capacity reflects the strength of this world-class resource, the success of our collaboration with the government and our co-venturers, and the contributions of thousands of Guyanese helping to build the country's energy future," he said.

Exxon emphasised that Uaru marks another significant step in the development of the Stabroek block, "one of the world's most prolific offshore discoveries."

The Errea Wittu FPSO has a storage capacity of two million barrels and was designed to deliver strong performance in safety, cost efficiency and emissions reduction, the Uaru project continues to advance operational excellence in Guyana.

ExxonMobil recently made a final investment decision on Longtail, the eighth development on the Stabroek block, the release added.

# Guyana, Canada sign landmark Air Services Agreement

GUYANA and Canada have signed a historic Air Services Agreement, modernising the framework for air travel between the two countries. Negotiated at the technical level in 2014 and now formally concluded, this agreement replaces the restrictive 2005 pact and signals a new era of enhanced connectivity and co-operation.

According to a press release, the agreement covers a comprehensive range of aviation protocols, including Grant of Rights, Designations, Application of Laws, Pricing, Terms of Carriage, Safety Standards, Certificates and Licences, Aviation Security, and charges for airports and aviation facilities. This robust framework ensures safe, efficient, and competitive air services.

Currently, Air Transat and Cargojet operate flights between Guyana and Canada, the release said adding that the Government of Guyana is also in advanced discussions with additional airlines interested in launching services, reflecting strong market potential for passenger and cargo growth.



**Guyana and Canada have signed a historic Air Services Agreement**

"Canada is home to the world's second largest Guyanese diaspora, primarily in Toronto. This agreement supports easier travel for families, strengthens business and tourism, and deepens the longstanding ties between the two nations," the release said.

The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference (ATConf/7) in Montreal by Deodat Indar, Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation, for Guyana, and Michael Vandergrift, Deputy Minister of Transport, for Canada.

"This signing is as a result of a lot of work, which we're very grateful for, and it's a reflection of the close ties between our two countries and the close ties between people in our two countries," Vandergrift said according to the release.

Meanwhile, Minister Indar said, "This Open Skies Agreement is a testament to the relationship between Guyana and Canada. It is also a testament to the longstanding relationship and renewed vigour between the two countries, working together to create strong economic ties and to make sure that people can travel between the countries easily and affordably."

Guyana and Canada have maintained diplomatic relations since May 26, 1966, a partnership now strengthened by this agreement.

# Vaping products totally banned in Guyana

The Guyana government has formally prohibited the importation of vaping products, devices and related substances, citing growing concerns about their use among children and young people and the potential risks to public health.

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance Dr. Ashni Singh signed the Customs (Amendment of Second Schedule) Order 2026 on Wednesday, November 11. The order was subsequently published in the Official Gazette.

The new measure amends the Second Schedule to the Customs Act, prohibiting the importation of vaping products, devices, components and substances unless written approval is granted by the minister responsible for health.

Such approval may only be granted for products intended for scientific research, training or medical purposes.

The restriction follows an announcement by President Irfaan Ali, who said the government was responding to concerns raised by parents, teachers, religious leaders and other members of society about the widespread and unregulated importation, sale and use of vaping products.



Ali highlighted several potential health risks associated with vaping, including nicotine addiction, effects on brain development in children and adolescents, risks during pregnancy, and possible respiratory and mental health consequences.

"The absence of complete knowledge about those long-term effects must not be mistaken for evidence of safety," he warned.

The president said discussions with parents, teachers and children had revealed growing concerns about vaping among teenagers and schoolchildren.

He urged families, educators, religious leaders and community representatives to raise awareness about the risks, particularly those associated with additives in vaping products.

"We have to protect our children, we have to protect our schools, we have to protect our society," Ali said.

Under the order, vaping products are broadly defined to include devices, components and substances, whether or not they contain or are intended for use with nicotine, tobacco, cannabis, cannabinoids or other substances.

The restrictions cover disposable, rechargeable and refillable devices that use batteries, electric currents or other energy sources to heat or vaporize substances for inhalation.

These include electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipes, vape pens, pod devices, box mods, dab pens and dry-herb vaporizers.

The prohibition also extends to vaping substances such as e-liquids, oils, distillates, concentrates, waxes, resins and gels, whether or not they contain nicotine or cannabinoids, provided they are packaged, labeled, marketed or intended for use with vaping devices.




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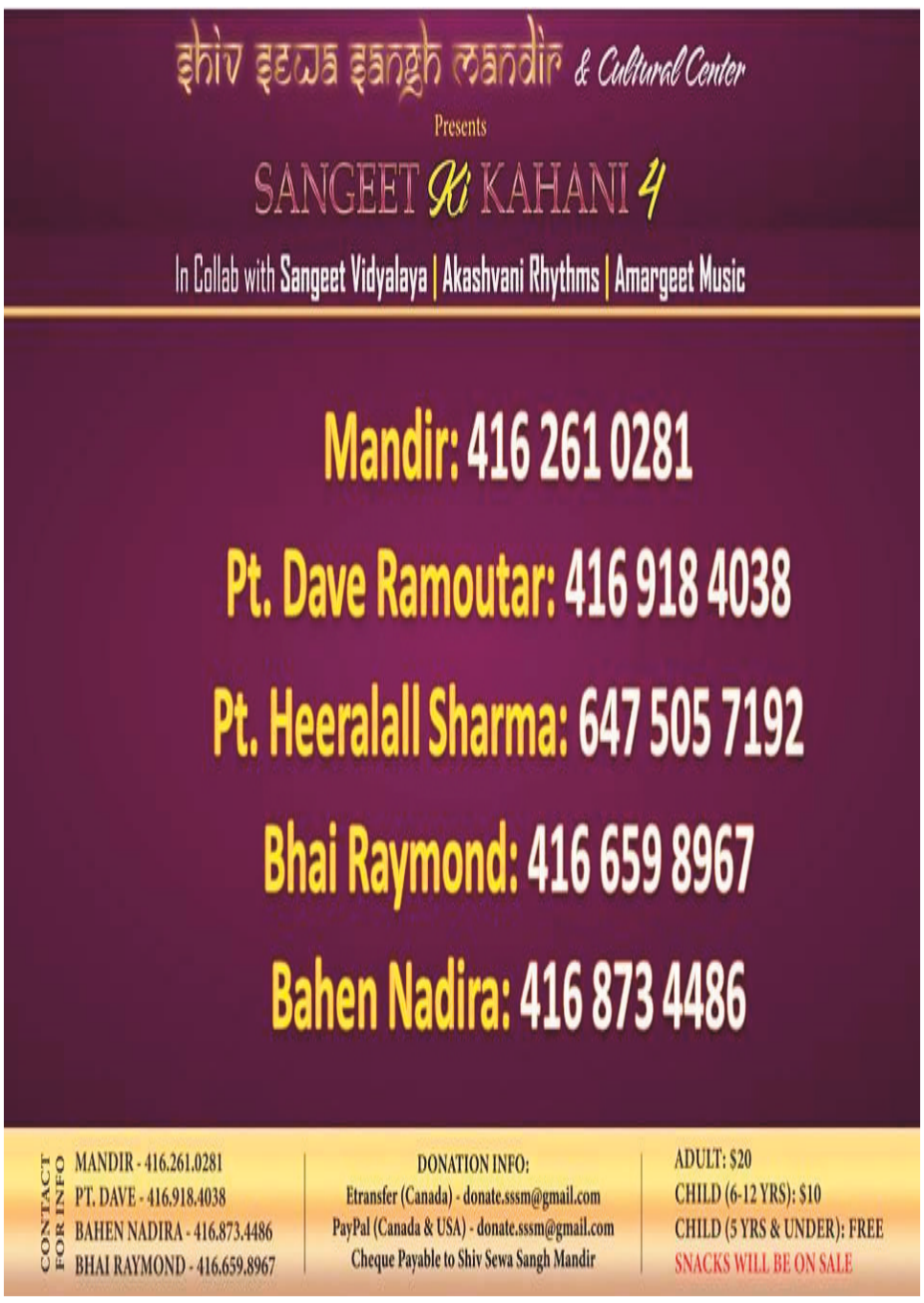
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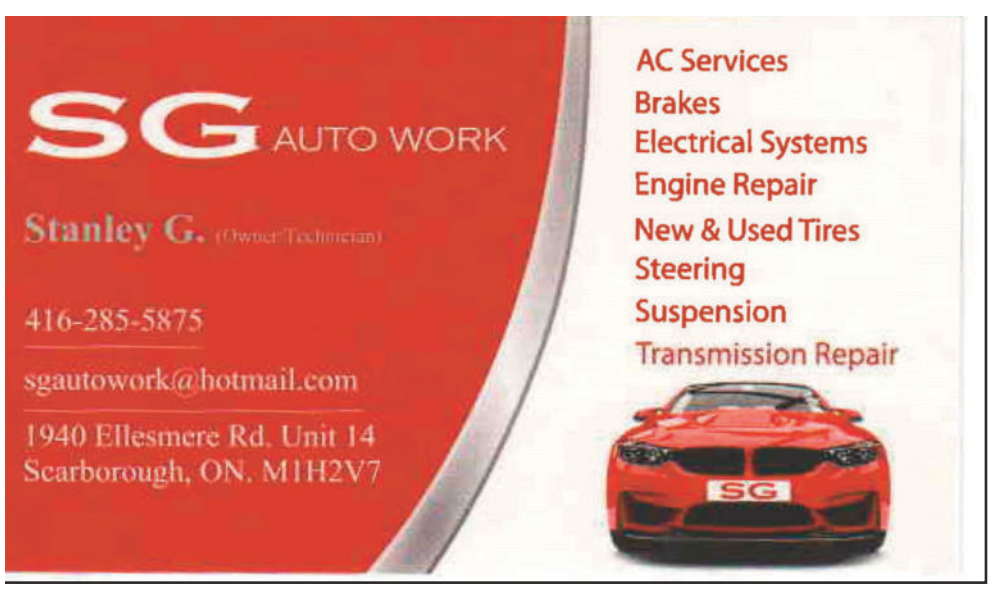








# ADS IN EQUALITY WORK!



# Guyana government ready for local elections, President Ali says

Guyana President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali says his government is prepared to hold Local Government Elections (LGE), but the opposition must first resolve internal disputes affecting the country's electoral process.

Speaking to journalists at his Shiv Chanderpaul Drive office in Georgetown on Friday, November 13, Ali said several outstanding matters surrounding the elections were beyond the government's control and required action from opposition parties.

He urged the opposition to clarify its position and communicate its decisions to the public and the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM).

"The courts are there for a purpose and if any stakeholder believes that they need something to be…analysed or adjudicated upon…they [can] use the arm of…the judiciary. I can say to you, as a government, we are ready," Ali said.

His comments come amid an ongoing dispute over the political composition of GECOM, which has reportedly prevented the electoral body from holding formal meetings since September 2025.

The We Invest in Nationhood (WIN) party emerged as the main opposition party following Guyana's September 2025 General and Regional Elections. However, the three opposition-nominated seats on GECOM remain occupied by commissioners appointed under the previous opposition leadership.

Ali maintained that resolving the dispute was the responsibility of the opposition rather than the government.

"Those [issues] have to be settled, and that has nothing to do with the government," he said.




**Guyana President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali**

Despite the uncertainty, Guyana's 2026 national budget allocated G$6.9 billion to GECOM to support its administrative preparations and electoral responsibilities.

Ali also emphasized the importance of leadership renewal within Guyana's democratic system, pointing to the ruling People's Progressive Party/Civic's (PPP/C) performance in previous local government elections.

At the last elections, held on June 12, 2023, the PPP/C secured control of 66 of the country's 80 local authority areas, while A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) won the remaining 14.

The president noted that the PPP/C had contested every constituency in previous local government elections and had consistently outperformed its political rivals.

He also pointed to previous divisions within the opposition, including the involvement of the Working People's Alliance (WPA), Alliance For Change (AFC) and People's National Congress Reform (PNCR).

According to Ali, the current disagreement is not the first time opposition parties have faced the challenge of resolving differences among competing political factions.

While reiterating his government's readiness to proceed with local elections, Ali maintained that the outstanding issues surrounding opposition representation must be addressed through the appropriate channels.

# Caribbean Airlines confirms passenger data breach

Caribbean Airlines has confirmed a data security breach involving its third-party reservations provider, Amadeus IT Group, S.A., which resulted in unauthorized access to passenger booking and travel information.

In a statement issued Sunday, November 15, the Trinidad and Tobago-based airline said it was informed by Amadeus that an unauthorized party had exploited a vulnerability in its system to access reservation data.

The incident also affected several major international airlines that use Amadeus services, including Japan Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific, Finnair, Thai Airways, Korean Air and Qantas.

Caribbean Airlines said preliminary findings from Amadeus indicate that no payment card information was compromised and that the breach was limited to passengers' booking and travel data.

The airline said its immediate priority is notifying customers affected by the incident, a process that remains ongoing.

According to Caribbean Airlines, Amadeus has since addressed the vulnerability and implemented stronger monitoring and detection measures to prevent similar incidents.




**The airline said the data breach involves its third party reservations provider**

The airline reiterated its commitment to protecting customers' personal information and maintaining high standards of data security and privacy.

"Caribbean Airlines takes the protection of personal information seriously and remains committed to safeguarding its customers' data by maintaining the highest standards in security and privacy measures," the company said.



The Samuel Hinds River Bridge

# Guyana names new US$35M Mackenzie-Wismar Bridge after Samuel Hinds

Guyana's President Dr. Irfaan Ali has announced that the newly commissioned US$35 million Mackenzie-Wismar Bridge in Linden, Region 10, will be named in honor of former President and Prime Minister Samuel Hinds, who currently serves as Guyana's ambassador to the United States.

The announcement was made on Sunday, November 15, during the official commissioning of the four-lane bridge, which replaces the 59-year-old single-lane crossing over the Demerara River.

The new structure, named the Samuel Hinds River Bridge, honors Guyana's longest-serving prime minister, who spent approximately 25 years working in Linden's bauxite industry before entering national politics.

“Samuel Hinds occupies a consequential place in Guyana’s political and public life. His service has been extraordinary,” Ali said during the ceremony, which Hinds attended alongside his wife, Yvonne Hinds.

Hinds, a chemical engineer by profession, entered politics alongside the late President Dr. Cheddi Jagan and became prime minister following the 1992 general election. He briefly served as president following Jagan's death in March 1997 before returning to the position of prime minister under successive administrations, serving until 2015.

Ali described Hinds as a personal mentor whose decades of public service and connection to Linden made him a fitting choice for the honor.

“This bridge will carry thousands of people across the river. But with your name attached to it, it will carry a story of service, commitment, and an enduring connection to the people of this region,” the president said.

The new bridge features four traffic lanes, two in each direction, along with barrier-separated pedestrian walkways, modern lighting and improved access roads. It will be toll-free for motorists and pedestrians. According to Guyana's Ministry of Public Works, the bridge includes a 224-meter concrete superstructure, replacing the original crossing in 1967, which permitted traffic to move in only one direction at a time.

The project was undertaken by China Railway Construction (Caribbean) Co. Ltd. and is expected to ease congestion, improve transportation and strengthen commercial connections between Linden, Guyana's hinterland and neighboring Brazil.

During the commissioning ceremony, Ali also announced that the two approach roads would be named after prominent Guyanese political figures.

The eastern approach, on the Mackenzie side, will honor the late Robert Corbin, a former deputy prime minister and opposition leader who died in October 2026. The western approach, on the Wismar side, will bear the name of current Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips.

The president said the decision to recognize leaders from different political backgrounds reflected their contributions to Guyana's development.

Ali emphasized that the bridge forms part of the government's wider infrastructure development program, aimed at improving connectivity between coastal communities, hinterland regions and South American markets.

The bridge's commissioning marks a major transportation upgrade for Linden.

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INDIA न्यूज़



Sonia Gandhi has been one of the most powerful political figures in India's history

# 'They will kill you too': Sonia Gandhi's turbulent journey in Indian politics

On the morning of 31 October 1984, Sonia Gandhi was a young wife and mother, living in the prime minister's residence in Delhi. She was about to take a bath when she heard shots ring out in the garden.

Her mother-in-law, Indira Gandhi, India's prime minister, had just left for her office in an adjoining building. Moments later, she would be assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards, in retaliation for the Indian army's storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Sikhism's holiest shrine, earlier that year.

The sound was like firecrackers, but "different". The children's nanny came pounding on the bathroom door, hysterical, pointing towards the garden.

"Mummy, Mummy," she tried to say. No words came. At the hospital, she waited for hours before a doctor's shake of the head told her what she feared.

The ordeal did not end there. Rajiv Gandhi, her husband and the elder son of Indira Gandhi, summoned from a rally in West Bengal, arrived to tell her that party leaders wanted him to become prime minister.

Sonia's response was fury and terror. "They will kill you; they will kill you, too!" she pleaded. Rajiv replied: "They will kill me anyway." That evening, as Indira's body lay at home, Rajiv was sworn in.

It is one of the most searing passages in Belonging: A Journey of Love, Sonia Gandhi's new memoir: private devastation unfolding alongside the pressures of public life.

The woman who had largely stayed away from politics was now married to India's prime minister, and would eventually find herself at the head of the Congress party, leading it through two general election victories and becoming one of the country's most consequential political figures.

The passage also foreshadows another devastating loss. In 1991, Rajiv himself was assassinated.

For Sonia, the years that followed were marked by retreat.

At 19, a young woman from a small Italian town, she had met Rajiv, an Indian student, in England. Their relationship took her into a new country and family, and a close bond with Indira followed. India became home through her husband and her mother-in-law.

After Rajiv's killing, even the public appearances required by the memorial trusts she headed became an ordeal. Before speeches, she feared tears would overwhelm her.

When the Dalai Lama asked whether she felt vengeful towards her husband's killers, she answered, "No, I don't," and burst into sobs. Slowly, she writes, Rajiv became "a presence within me rather than a piercing absence".

But grief returned at family milestones. At her son Rahul's Cambridge graduation in 1995, she and her children were overcome by the thought of how proud Rajiv would have been.

Politics, meanwhile, was closing in. The Congress party, the political vehicle of her husband's family for generations, was losing cohesion and electoral ground. Senior leaders were defecting, and the calls for Sonia to step in were growing louder.

The memoir's most dramatic political scene, however, comes seven years later, after Congress's 2004 election victory. Sonia had led the party's campaign.

Sonia goes with Manmohan Singh to meet India's president at the presidential palace in Delhi and formally stake the Congress-led alliance's claim to form a government. Everyone assumes she will become prime minister. She says nothing.

At home, she tells a senior aide she intends to refuse. Party workers gather at the gates; senior colleagues demand a meeting.

"You fought the election, you led us," says one. "People believed in you. How can you let them down like this? Our workers will revolt. You think they'll accept another leader?"




**ARIES (March 21 — April 20):** If something you have been working on for some time suffers a setback today you must not lose heart. It is nothing more than a temporary pause while the universe rearranges things so you can enjoy a more successful outcome in the long-term. Keep at it.

**TAURUS (April 21 — May 21):** If you get the feeling that a loved one is sending out some kind of distress signal today don't hesitate to reach out to them. They may not come right out and say they need your assistance but you're not blind and you can see that they do.

**GEMINI (May 22 — June 21):** The best way to deal with people who let you down is to turn your back on them and walk away. You could, of course, deliver a few choice words as a parting shot, but is it worth the potential hassle? No it is not, so just leave.

**CANCER (June 22 — July 23):** It may annoy you that someone you work or do business with is so blatantly breaking the rules but unless you are directly affected by their actions you are advised to keep your mouth shut and keep your distance. The less you interact with them the better.

**LEO (July 24 — Aug. 23):** You don't have to accept that a friend or colleague knows best just because they are more experienced in a certain area of life than you are. Intellect is not always a good guide to reasonable behavior, so stick with your own inner judgment.

**VIRGO (Aug. 24 — Sept. 23):** There may be moments over the next few days when you doubt that you have what it takes to meet a challenge that has been placed in front of you, but you do. Believe in yourself and act as if you cannot possibly fail, and you won't.

**LIBRA (Sept. 24 — Oct. 23):** If something disturbing happens today you may be inclined to ignore it and hope that it goes away without affecting you, but that is unlikely. The best way to get past it is to face it head on and refuse to lie to yourself about the causes.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24 — Nov. 22):** There is so much more you can achieve both in your personal life and in your career, so don't slow down. The Sun may be moving toward the end of its stay in your sign but you still have plenty of time to make your mark on the world.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 — Dec. 21):** If you keep things simple today you won't go far wrong, but if you complicate matters by overthinking events you could end up in knots. Focus on one problem at a time and look for an obvious answer rather than a hidden one.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 — Jan. 20):** You may prefer facts and figures to instinct and intuition but over the next few days you will need to reverse that and trust your feelings more. Can you be sure that what others tell you is the unvarnished truth? No you cannot, so be cautious.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 — Feb. 19):** You may think you know someone very well but you will discover today there is a side to their nature that you missed completely. The fact that they kept it so well hidden may worry you but it's unlikely to be for any malicious reason.

**PISCES (Feb. 20 — Mar. 20):** There are so many changes taking place in your world that everything seems to be going past you in a bit of a blur. Don't worry. The planets suggest it will all work out for the best in the end, so sit back, relax and enjoy the show.

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# Privy Council rules against Trinidad and Tobago's anti-gay laws

The London-based Privy Council on Tuesday unanimously ruled in favor of Trinidad and Tobago-born LGBTQ+ activist Jason Jones in his legal challenge against laws criminalizing consensual same-sex relations between adults.

The ruling marks a significant victory for Jones, 62, who challenged Sections 13 and 16 of Trinidad and Tobago's Sexual Offences Act of 1986, arguing that the provisions violated his constitutional rights to privacy, family life and personal freedom.

Section 13 of the legislation criminalizes "buggery," while Section 16 prohibits certain sexual acts other than intercourse, with an exception for consensual acts conducted privately between men and women over the age of 16.

Jones, who now resides in Britain, welcomed the decision but said broader issues of human rights and equality for LGBTQ+ people remain unresolved across the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions where colonial-era laws continue to exist.

Before the ruling, Jones had expressed confidence that the Privy Council would uphold his constitutional challenge.

"The Privy Council will never uphold a 500-year-old homophobic piece of British law that goes against the rights of the individual! Not in 2026! I'm going to win," he said.

Former Trinidad and Tobago Attorney General Anand Ramlogan, who represented Jones, described the decision as a "landmark victory for gay rights, equal dignity and respect for private and family life in Trinidad and Tobago."

The case followed years of legal proceedings. The High Court initially ruled that the disputed provisions were unconstitutional, finding that they violated Jones's fundamental rights. However, the Court of Appeal subsequently upheld portions of the legislation, determining that certain provisions were protected under constitutional safeguards for existing laws.

Jones appealed that decision to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, Trinidad and Tobago's highest appellate court, while the Attorney General filed a cross-appeal seeking to preserve the validity of the provisions.

In its unanimous decision, the Privy Council allowed Jones's appeal and dismissed the Attorney General's cross-appeal, finding that the disputed provisions were not protected from constitutional challenges.

The judges determined that the 1986 Sexual Offences Act constituted new legislation rather than a continuation of laws existing before Trinidad and Tobago's Constitution came into force in 1976.



Privy Council said the anti-gay law was unconstitutional

The court also rejected arguments that the criminal provisions were reasonably justifiable based on longstanding traditions.

"The criminalisation of private, consensual same-sex relations interferes with a fundamental aspect of Mr Jones's life and identity," the Privy Council stated.

The judges emphasized that the ability to form intimate relationships is central to the constitutional right to private and family life and that restrictions on such relationships must meet the standard of being reasonably justifiable in a society that respects individual rights and freedoms.

They further noted that the Attorney General had presented no evidence demonstrating that the longstanding nature of the laws justified their continued enforcement.

"In any event, the interference with the most intimate aspects of Mr Jones's private life is too severe for the relevant provisions to be considered as striking a fair balance and to be reasonably justifiable," the judges said.

The judgment was delivered by Lord Sales and Lord Burrows, with the remaining members of the Judicial Committee agreeing.

## Antigua changed position on Cuba after US warning

Prime Minister Gaston Browne has revealed that Antigua and Barbuda changed its intended position on a United Nations resolution calling for an end to the United States embargo against Cuba after Washington warned that supporting the measure could jeopardize ongoing negotiations over visa restrictions affecting Antiguan and Barbudan nationals.

Speaking on his weekly radio program, Browne said his government had initially planned to support Cuba but reconsidered after receiving a call from the U.S. State Department.

"In fact, I'll make this public. We had decided to support Cuba on a resolution recently and changed our position because we had a call from the State Department advising us that they're making progress in the negotiations and if we supported Cuba, that it would undermine the negotiations, so we changed our position," Browne said.

He explained that Antigua and Barbuda's ambassador to the United Nations had been instructed to abstain from the vote, although the country was ultimately recorded as absent.

"Our instructions to the ambassador in New York was to abstain. I noticed he did not show up, I don't know what happened, but we changed our position because of certain things that were said and we're still trying, but it's not something we have any control over," he added.

The revelation comes amid continued diplomatic efforts by the Antigua and Barbuda government to address U.S. visa restrictions that have affected nationals seeking to travel to the United States.

During the October 28 UN vote on the resolution calling for an end to the decades-old U.S. economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries took differing positions.

Jamaica, Haiti and Guyana abstained, while Trinidad and Tobago voted against the resolution. The Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Suriname voted in favor.

Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and St. Lucia were recorded as absent. Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has since defended her government's position, saying the country could not ignore what she described as oppression in Cuba.

# Caribbean, Canadian officials discuss stronger protections for seasonal farmworkers

Improved housing conditions, workplace safety, healthcare access and stronger contractual protections for Caribbean farmworkers employed in Canada are among the issues being discussed at the 2026 Canada-Caribbean Annual Review Meeting in Jamaica.

The meeting, being held from November 8 to 12 at Moon Palace Resort in Ocho Rios, St. Ann, brings together government officials, employers and other stakeholders to review the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Programme (SAWP) and consider improvements ahead of the next agricultural season.

Speaking at the opening and awards ceremony on Sunday, November 8, Jamaica's Minister of Labour and Social Security Pearnel Charles Jr. said discussions would focus on employers' housing obligations, temperature control in workers' accommodations, health and safety insurance, and other measures to strengthen worker protections.

"The welfare of our workers must be evident in their experience throughout the full chain, from recruitment, preparation, employment and even in their return home," Charles said.

"A worker must understand the contract before leaving home. Agreed wages should be paid correctly and on time. Accommodation should meet appropriate standards," he added.

The minister emphasized that workers must also have access to healthcare and compensation where applicable, as well as mechanisms to seek assistance when problems arise.

"I want to encourage us to approach every matter as being important. Anything that touches and concerns the experience of a worker is going to be relevant to the experience of an employer," he said.

Charles also highlighted the importance of supporting workers' emotional well-being, noting that many spend extended periods away from their families while employed on Canadian farms.

He said the ministry's Family Service Unit helps workers maintain contact with relatives and addresses family-related welfare concerns. Employers and liaison officers also have a responsibility to identify and respond to challenges affecting workers, he added.

The annual meeting comes as Jamaica marks 60 years of participation in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Programme, which began in 1966 when 264 Jamaican workers traveled to Ontario to take up agricultural employment.

Since then, the program has provided generations of Jamaicans with opportunities to support their families, finance their children's education and improve their living conditions.



**Many seasonal farm workers in Canada are from the Caribbean**

Charles said its continued success depends on participating governments maintaining effective recruitment and deployment arrangements, employers fulfilling their contractual obligations and workers meeting their responsibilities.

Canada's High Commissioner to Jamaica, Mark Berman, reaffirmed his government's commitment to working with Caribbean countries to strengthen the program and improve conditions for participating workers.

"Together we'll continue strengthening worker protection, supporting programme integrity, improving service delivery and responding to evolving labour market needs," Berman said.

He noted that the annual review provides an opportunity for governments, employers and program administrators to address concerns relating to worker protection, employer responsibilities, compliance and service delivery.

Berman also highlighted Jamaica's continued importance to Canada's agricultural sector, revealing that more than 8,000 Jamaican workers traveled to Canada under the program last year.

"Their skills, professionalism and dedication have helped Canadian producers meet seasonal labour needs, have strengthened food security and support communities across the country," he said.

The Canada-Caribbean Annual Review Meeting includes ministers and senior government officials from participating Caribbean countries, Canadian government representatives, liaison services, employer organizations and other stakeholders.

Participants are expected to review the program's operations, consider proposed contractual amendments and establish priorities for the upcoming agricultural season.



# Jamaica records three million visitors, US$3 billion in tourism earnings

Jamaica welcomed three million visitors and generated more than US$3 billion in tourism earnings in the year following Hurricane Melissa, despite the widespread damage caused by the Category 5 storm in October 2025.

Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett announced the figures on November 3 during the Tourism Agricultural Opportunities Forum at the AC Hotel by Marriott Kingston, noting that while visitor arrivals and earnings remain below the previous year's levels, the figures reflect the sector's recovery.

Hurricane Melissa struck Jamaica on October 28, 2025, forcing approximately 43 percent of the country's hotel room stock to close.

However, Bartlett said the tourism sector reached a major recovery milestone just seven weeks later, reopening on December 15 with access to 70 percent of its room stock.

"Jamaica is the number one country in the entire world of tourism in terms of the recovery of 1.5 months after a Category 5 hurricane," the Minister said.



Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett

Bartlett noted that comparative data showed Florida had taken six months to recover from a disruption of similar magnitude.

The tourism minister also highlighted the close relationship between tourism and agriculture, emphasizing how disruptions in one sector can have significant consequences for the other.

Hurricane Melissa caused approximately J$30 billion in agricultural losses, affecting more than 70,000 farmers and over 41,000 hectares of farmland.

"When hotels close, farmers lose market. When farms were damaged, hotels lost dependable sources of Jamaican produce," Minister Bartlett said.

He stressed that strengthening connections between tourism and agriculture is essential to building a more resilient economy capable of withstanding future disasters.

"Melissa reminded us that resilience is not simply the capacity of individual industries to recover; it is a capacity of an entire economy to withstand disruption and emerge stronger,"

# Holness moves to improve JA's public beaches

Prime Minister Dr. Andrew Holness has directed Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett to oversee improvements to at least 10 public beaches across Jamaica in the next national budget, amid mounting concerns about Jamaicans' access to the island's coastline.

Holness made the announcement on Sunday, November 15, while addressing the Jamaica Labour Party's (JLP) 83rd annual conference at the Montego Bay Convention Centre in St. James.

The prime minister acknowledged that beach access has become a contentious national issue, attracting criticism both locally and internationally.

"I know that in the public order and public spaces session the issue of beach access would have been raised, a sore topic for many Jamaicans, and a growing cause for international concern and indeed bad publicity for Jamaica," Holness said.

He indicated that the government has been reviewing the situation and that an assessment of beaches across the island has already been conducted.

"The Government has been paying close attention to this, and while it is not my proposal to discuss the full issue here, your minister of tourism has been charged — they have assessed all the beaches in Jamaica — I am giving him a task to ensure that in the next budget at least 10 public beaches are improved," Holness said.

He said the improvements should go beyond simply allowing Jamaicans to enter beaches, with a focus on providing clean and safe recreational facilities. The government also intends to expand free public beach access through the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF).

"So that the average Jamaican can get not just access, not just walk on the beach, but can have a facility that is clean and a facility that is also safe; and thereafter, to execute a programme through the Tourism Enhancement Fund to ensure that every parish has at least two public beaches with free access," the prime minister added.

The announcement follows months of public debate over access to Jamaica's beaches, particularly amid concerns about coastal development and restrictions affecting communities that have traditionally used certain beaches.

In August, Bartlett rejected claims that Jamaicans were being denied access to the country's beaches, arguing that some individuals were creating a misleading impression internationally.

The government subsequently published a list of 60 beaches across the island that it said offered free public access.

However, environmental advocacy groups have challenged the government's position. The Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) has called for beaches to be legally recognized as public commons, arguing that existing policies do not adequately guarantee Jamaicans the right to access the coastline.

The Jamaica Beach Birthright Environmental Movement (JaBBEM) has also called for the repeal of the Beach Control Act, which governs the use and management of Jamaica's beaches.

The latest commitment signals a renewed government focus on improving public beach infrastructure while addressing concerns about accessibility.

Holness did not identify the 10 beaches earmarked for improvements or provide details on the proposed budget. However, his announcement sets out a broader objective of ensuring that each of Jamaica's 14 parishes has at least two public beaches offering free access.

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# St. Kitts and Nevis to phase out citizenship by investment program

St. Kitts and Nevis will begin winding down its 42-year-old Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program following discussions with the European Union, Prime Minister Dr. Terrance Drew announced on Friday, November 13.

In a national address, Drew said the government had formally notified European officials of its decision to phase out the program, the oldest of its kind in the world, to protect the federation's international reputation, visa-free travel arrangements and access to the global financial system.

"St. Kitts and Nevis will wind down its Citizenship by Investment Programme responsibly on a timeline now being negotiated with the European Union," he stated.

The prime minister stressed that the decision does not mean an immediate termination of the program and that individuals who lawfully obtained St. Kitts and Nevis citizenship would not be affected.

"Nothing changes tonight for any person who lawfully holds our citizenship," he said.

Drew confirmed that the program would continue operating under strict regulatory standards until a final application deadline is agreed upon. He also ruled out discounted applications or accelerated processing ahead of its closure.

"There will be no rush, no discounts, and no fire sale. Our citizenship will never again be sold cheaply on the basis of buyer meets seller," he declared.

The announcement follows changes to European Union policy that took effect in December 2025, allowing the bloc to consider the operation of citizenship by investment programs as grounds for suspending visa-free travel.

According to Drew, the European Commission wrote to St. Kitts and Nevis in June 2026, inviting the government to wind down its program over a transitional period to preserve visa-free access to the Schengen area.

He warned that continuing the program against the concerns of international partners could have consequences beyond travel restrictions, including increased scrutiny from financial institutions and potential disruptions to correspondent banking relationships.

Such disruptions, he explained, could affect remittances, credit card transactions, international payments and businesses that depend on imported goods.

"No responsible leader would gamble with that. I will not gamble with that. You are too important," Drew said.

Program generated billions in revenue

Established in 1984, the citizenship by investment program has played a significant role in the federation's economic development, particularly following the closure of the sugar industry and the country's transition toward a services-based economy.



St Kitts & Nevis Prime Minister Dr Terrance Drew

Drew said the program generated approximately EC$6.5 billion between 2008 and 2025, accounting for about half of the cash collected by the federal government during that period.

The revenue helped finance government operations, roads, schools, affordable housing and major developments, including the Park Hyatt hotel. It also supported the country's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, Drew acknowledged that the federation's reliance on CBI revenue created economic vulnerabilities.

He said the program's contribution to government revenue had declined from as much as 70% in 2022 to less than 20% in 2026, which he attributed to efforts to diversify the economy.

With the program set to be phased out, Drew said the government would accelerate its Sustainable Island State Agenda, focusing on foreign direct investment, renewable energy, digital transformation, tourism and the creative economy.

He said the government has been engaging international partners, including the European Commission, Taiwan, the United States, Ireland, Saudi Arabia and Italy, along with regional and international development institutions.

The prime minister also identified music, carnival, filmmaking, design, hotel development and the yachting industry as areas with potential for economic growth and employment.

Drew assured employees of the Citizenship by Investment Unit that they would continue working as the country transitions away from the program.

He said staff would be redeployed to support efforts to attract foreign direct investment, drawing on their experience working with international investors.

The government also plans to expand technical and vocational education, scholarships, apprenticeships and workforce training to help citizens benefit from new investment opportunities.

The prime minister thanked developers, agents and service providers who had supported the program and reassured existing citizenship-by-investment holders that they remained welcome in St. Kitts and Nevis.

He also encouraged citizens at home and abroad, including members of the diaspora, to contribute their skills, experience and investments to the federation's next phase of development.



# Holness defends Jamaica's abstention on Cuba embargo vote

Prime Minister Dr. Andrew Holness has defended Jamaica's decision to abstain from a United Nations vote on the U.S. embargo against Cuba, saying the country will continue to stand in solidarity with the Cuban people while pursuing a foreign policy that prioritizes its national development interests.

On October 28, Jamaica was among 25 countries that abstained from the UN General Assembly resolution calling for an end to the U.S. embargo against Cuba. The resolution passed with 130 votes in favor and 17 against.

Speaking at the Jamaica Labour Party's (JLP) 83rd annual conference in Montego Bay, St. James, on Sunday, November 15, Holness rejected criticism from the opposition over the government's decision, arguing that Jamaica should not be drawn into ideological conflicts or foreign policy positions rooted in the past.



**Jamaica PM Andrew Holness**

"We support a strong multilateral system that protects the voice of small states. But under my leadership, Jamaica will never dip our toes in any single ideological agenda or grouping or be drawn into unnecessary conflicts for mindless support of outdated rhetorics," Holness said.

The prime minister maintained that Jamaica's position does not signal a withdrawal of support for the Cuban people.

"We stand in solidarity with the people of Cuba. We want our brothers and sisters there to enjoy the political and economic freedoms that we have here," he said.

Holness argued that constructive dialogue between the United States and Cuba, along with reforms within Cuba, offers the most practical path toward ending the country's longstanding economic isolation and preventing further regional tensions.

"We believe that constructive dialogue between the United States and Cuba, and greater reforms in Cuba, will provide the only practical path to resolve the longstanding economic isolation of Cuba and avoid conflict in the region," he stated.

The prime minister also reaffirmed Jamaica's willingness to continue cooperating with Cuba, including accepting Cuban professionals who work in the island's healthcare, education and other sectors.

"We welcome them to work in Jamaica in keeping with Jamaican and international law," Holness said.

He noted that Jamaica maintains similar arrangements with countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, allowing skilled professionals to work in the local economy under conditions that respect workers' rights and comply with Jamaican law.

Addressing the broader direction of Jamaica's foreign policy, Holness referenced a declaration by JLP founder and former Prime Minister Sir Alexander Bustamante that Jamaica was "with the West."

He explained that the statement reflected support for liberal democracy, human rights, free markets, freedom of political and religious beliefs, international law, sovereign equality, territorial integrity and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

According to Holness, those principles continue to underpin Jamaica's foreign policy, alongside the pursuit of the country's economic and development interests.

He said the government's approach combines principled diplomacy with practical considerations, placing sovereignty, security, economic independence and the well-being of Jamaicans at the center of its international relations.

The prime minister maintained that Jamaica would continue engaging with international partners while avoiding commitments that could undermine its national interests.



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# ICC eyes major crackdown on T20 franchise leagues

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is considering a tougher regulatory framework for T20 franchise cricket, with proposed changes that could significantly affect the structure and commercial prospects of several leagues around the world.

The recommendations, developed by a review group established in July, are scheduled for discussion by chief executives and board presidents at the ICC's quarterly meeting in Bali this weekend.

At the heart of the proposals is a push for greater control over how leagues are approved, regulated and monitored, particularly in areas involving player eligibility, disciplinary action, sponsorship and anti-corruption safeguards.

Among the most consequential recommendations is stricter enforcement of overseas-player restrictions, a move that could place the UAE's International League T20 (ILT20) and Major League Cricket (MLC) in the United States under considerable pressure.

Both competitions were granted exemptions when the ICC introduced its player-capping limits in 2023, allowing them to field significantly more foreign players than the standard arrangement.

ILT20 currently permits as many as nine overseas players in a playing XI, while MLC allows six. The review group's proposal for a maximum of four overseas players per XI could therefore force both competitions to reconsider their recruitment models, potentially weakening their commercial appeal and limiting opportunities for international players.

One league official described the recommendations as “very concerning,” questioning whether his competition could remain viable under such restrictions. The official also pointed to previous assurances that the leagues would be protected by a grandfather clause.

The proposed reforms extend beyond team composition. The ICC wants greater authority to examine, review or audit sanctions issued by its Full Members, as well as the power to intervene when a member board fails to meet its regulatory responsibilities or significant integrity concerns emerge.




**T20 cricketers may face new ICC rules**

The review group has also recommended that leagues be required to use the ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit or an approved equivalent. Restrictions on sponsorship from betting companies and the introduction of a league-sanctioning fee are also being considered.

The broader objective is to address concerns surrounding corruption, unstable ownership arrangements and cases of players going unpaid in the increasingly crowded franchise-cricket landscape.

The review was led by Bangladesh Cricket Board President Tamim Iqbal, with England and Wales Cricket Board chief executive Richard Gould, Cricket Australia chief Todd Greenberg and Board of Control for Cricket in India secretary Devajit Saikia among its members. The group said external legal advice indicated that ICC members would have no sound legal basis for challenging the proposed changes.

Other matters expected to feature in the discussions include the standardization of solidarity payments to member boards, clarification of the regulatory status of legends leagues and the possibility of limiting the number of franchise competitions hosted by an individual member.

If adopted, the recommendations would represent a substantial shift in the ICC's oversight of franchise cricket, potentially reshaping the operating environment for leagues that have built their models around greater access to overseas talent.

# Warrican eyes Bishoo's record after 100 Test milestone

Jomel Warrican is determined to make his mark in West Indies cricket history, with the left-arm spinner setting his sights on further milestones after reaching the coveted 100-wicket mark in Test cricket.

The Barbadian described the achievement as both “special” and “unreal,” believing it carries significance beyond his personal career by reinforcing the importance of spin bowling in a West Indies tradition long dominated by fast bowlers.

Warrican reached the landmark during the recent two-Test series against Bangladesh, where his outstanding return of 16 wickets earned him Player of the Series honors. Having established himself as an increasingly influential member of the regional attack, he now has two immediate targets: surpassing former West Indies leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo's 117 wickets before pursuing the 150-wicket milestone.

For Warrican, reaching three figures represents the fulfilment of a personal ambition and an important statement about the contribution spinners can make to West Indies cricket.

“It still feels unreal, like something you dream of as a spinner playing international cricket for the West Indies,” Warrican said in a recent interview.

“You know you have a legacy of pacers, so to achieve 100 Test wickets, I think, as a spinner, is a great achievement personally and also just for spinners in the Caribbean, knowing that there’s a place for us in West Indies cricket.”

The achievement was particularly rewarding given the different challenges he encountered during the Bangladesh series. Starting the campaign with 84 Test wickets, Warrican had to adapt his approach to contrasting surfaces in Dhaka and Sylhet to complete his impressive haul.

Warrican's success in Bangladesh was built on his ability to recognize what each pitch demanded and adjust his methods accordingly.

Among the 16 wickets he collected against Bangladesh, Warrican singled out the dismissals of Mehidy Hasan Miraz in both innings of the opening Test as his favorite moments from the series.




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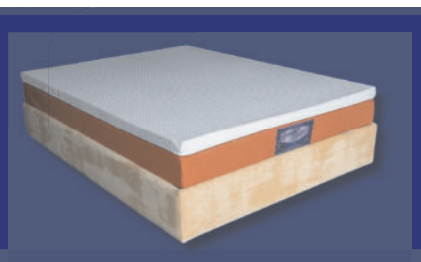
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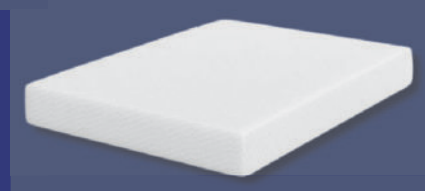
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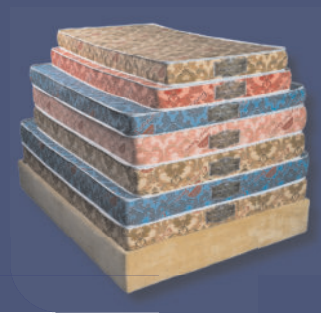
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| The Launch of Tourism Awareness Month | Oct 31 | Aiden Hotel, Georgetown |
| Tourism Is Everybody's Business Campaign | Nov 1 - 30 | Online/Physical |
| Communications/PR-Advertising & Marketing Support, Banners, Videos, Ads | Nov 1 - 30 | Online/Physical |
| TOURVEMBER | Nov 1 - 30 | Discounted curated tour packages across Destination Guyana |
| Clean Up Exercise | Nov 1 | Kara Kara Blue Lake |
| Guyana for $10,000 | Nov 1 - 20 | Online |
| World Travel Market | Nov 3 - 5 | Excel, London |
| Launch of GuyWay | Nov 6 | Four Points by Sheraton |
| Radio Broadcast & Trivia | Nov 6, 13, 20 & 27 | Georgetown & Linden |
| Bauxite to Blue Adventure Family Quest | Nov 8 | Linden, Region 10 |
| Global Tourism Forum | Nov 9 | Brussels, Belgium |
| Business Proposal Writing Training | Nov 11 | Region 2, Guyana |
| Tourism Village at GuyExpo | Nov 12 - 15 | National Exhibition Centre, Sophia |
| School Outreach | Nov 16 - 27 | Region 10 |

| EVENT | DATE | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|
| Tourism Product Launch | Nov 18 | Georgetown |
| Birding Exploration | Nov 18 & 19 | Linden, Region 10 |
| Launch of Rif's Hotel | Nov 20 | Anna Regina, Region 2 |
| Canvas & Cassava: A Cultural Experience. | Nov 20 | Lake Capoey, Region 2 |
| Media Familiarization Tour | Nov 20 - 22 | Region 2 |
| Taxi Driver Ambassador Training Programme | Nov 23 | Georgetown, Guyana |
| Launch of WildKai | Nov 25 | Bartica, Region 7 |
| South Rupununi Safari | Nov 25 - 30 | South Rupununi |
| Snap and Share Video Edition Awards Ceremony | Nov 26 | ACCC |
| Rupununi Expo | Nov 28 - 29 | Lethem, Region 9 |
| Bauxite to Blue Biz Mixer | Nov 28 | Linden, Region 10 |
| Christmas Tree Light Up | Nov 29 | Rahaman's Park, Region 4 |
| Clean Up Exercise | Nov 29 | Demerara Riverfront, Linden, Region 10 |
| Small Business Bureau Awards Ceremony | Nov 30 | Four Points by Sheraton |
| Diaspora Symposium | Nov 30 | Hybrid |
| Launch of Christmas Village, Main Street | Dec 4 | Main Street, Georgetown |
| Tourism Awards and Hall of Fame | Dec 12 | Lethem, Region 9 |



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