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102 graduate from Agriculture school

One hundred and two students graduated from the Guyana School of Agriculture (GSA) during the institution's 61st Graduation Ceremony, with Agriculture Minister, Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha, reaffirming the Government's commitment to strengthening agricultural education, expanding opportunities for young professionals and preparing a skilled workforce to support Guyana's rapidly developing agriculture sector.

Delivering the feature address, Minister Mustapha commended the graduates on their achievements and underscored the important role the institution continues to play in developing the human resources needed to advance agricultural production, research, innovation and food security.

The Class of 2026 comprised 65 females and 37 males who completed studies across six programmes offered at the Mon Repos and Essequibo campuses. Of the 102 graduates, 66 earned either a Credit or Distinction, while ten students who were referred in 2025 successfully completed their programmes this year.

The graduating class represented nine of Guyana's ten administrative regions, along with 12 students from CARICOM countries, including ten from Grenada and two from Saint Lucia. Two Grenadian nationals, Mr. Jacob Thomas and Ms. Adonis Jones, were also recognised among the year's outstanding performers.



Guyana nears 6,000 hotel rooms

GUYANA'S tourism sector is poised for further growth, with the country's accommodation capacity projected to approach 6,000 rooms by the end of 2026, as increased hotel investment positions the destination to welcome more visitors and accommodate a growing conference and leisure travel market.

Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority, Kamrul Baksh, outlined the sector's expansion while addressing the State of the Industry Conference (SOTIC) 2026, noting that the country's room stock has grown significantly from the relatively small number of rooms available in 2020.

The expansion has been supported by increased investment in the hospitality industry, including the entry of international hotel brands such as Hyatt, AC by Marriott, Four Points by Sheraton and others, alongside the development of additional accommodation properties.

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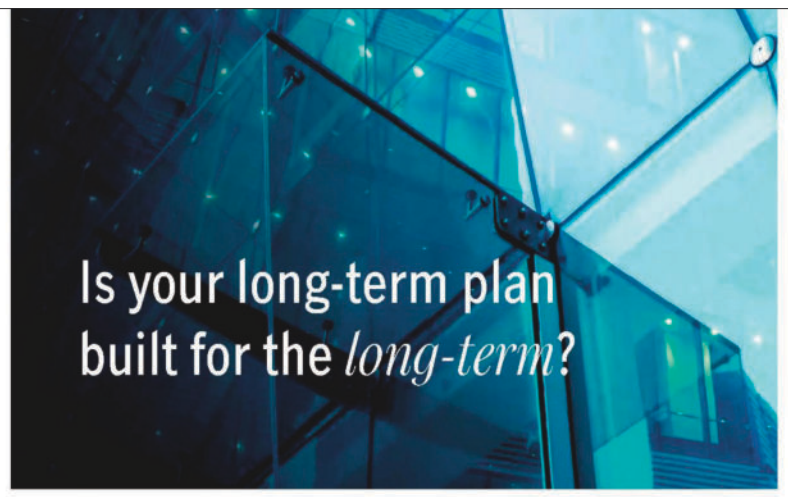
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AI gets a $500M boost

By MIlan Maharaj
LJI REPORTER

The Federal Government is committing another $500 million in five years to support companies to integrate artificial intelligence technology and develop Canadian innovations in response to the industry's environmental impact and regulatory issues.

The announcement on October 13 from Artificial Intelligence Minister Evan Solomon increases the Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative to $700 million. The initiative aims to support companies using AI and innovative firms in commercializing their technologies.

More than half of Canada's AI companies are located in Southern Ontario. The funds will be targeted in the healthcare, agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, energy, and natural resources industries.

Deep Breathe Inc, a firm out of London Ontario, is among the recipients. The company will commercialize an AI-driven lung ultrasound technology worth $2 million. FedDev Ontario will contribute over $1 million in expanding its application in hospitals and emergency services. However, there are environmental issues associated with the infrastructure needed for AI. Large data centres use substantial amounts of electricity, and they may need substantial amounts of water for cooling, thus straining local resources.

In September, the government put forward Responsible Data Centre Development Principles calling for reducing water consumption, protecting electricity ratepayers and providing disclosure about the impact on the local area. This adds to the existing Indigenous, provincial, municipal laws.

There is a need for governments to find a balance between innovations in AI and ensuring proper controls around transparency and responsible use.





Guyanese
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VISA BARRIERS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY OF CARIBBEAN CONNECTIONS - PRESIDENT ALI

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President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali joins Caribbean tourism leaders in a traditional coconut-breaking ceremony to officially open SOTIC 2026 in Guyana, as the region confronts barriers to connectivity and tourism growth.



GUYANA DEVELOPMENT BANK OPENS FOR BUSINESS WITH $3M SME FINANCING

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MORE THAN 100 WITNESSES EXPECTED AS BARIMA INQUIRY OPENS OCTOBER 14

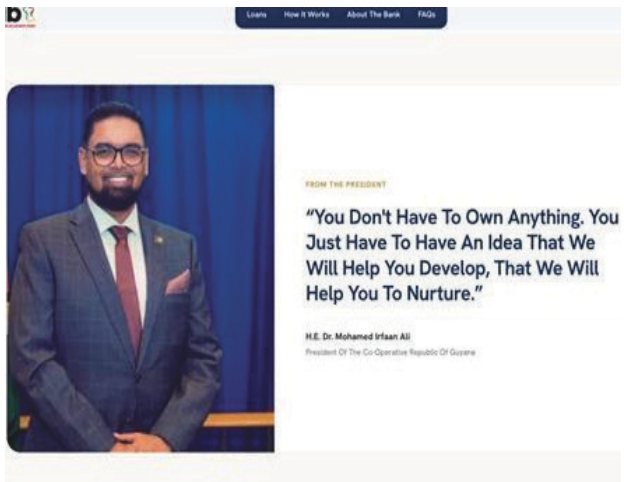
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AVIATION NETWORK TAKES OFF WITH THREE NEW INTERNATIONAL ACCORDS

PAGE 3

GUYANA DEVELOPMENT BANK OPENS FOR BUSINESS WITH $3M SME FINANCING



For small businesses with viable ideas but without the assets traditionally required to secure financing, the opening of the Guyana Development Bank creates a new route to capital.

The bank began operations on October 5, offering small and medium-sized enterprises loans of up to $3 million with no collateral and no interest.

The model targets one of the biggest barriers facing entrepreneurs: access to affordable capital. Alongside financing, the bank will provide business planning, mentorship and technical support to help applicants build sustainable enterprises.

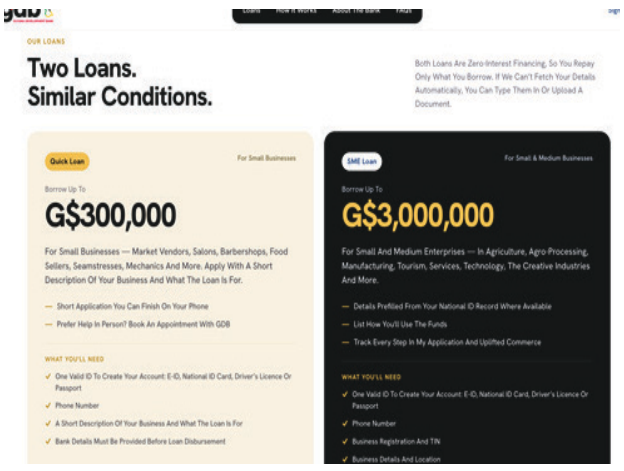
The institution has been capitalised initially with $20 billion, the first tranche of its authorised $40 billion share capital.

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali said the bank is intended to bring people who have historically been shut out of formal financing into greater participation in the economy.

"This is not a grant," he said. "This is your opportunity to earn, your opportunity to build your credit, and your pathway to participate in our national expansion."

The bank is designed to serve entrepreneurs across all ten regions, with digital and mobile access intended to reach urban, riverain and hinterland communities.

Financing below $300,000 will be available through a Quick Loan facility requiring less documentation, while loans between $300,000 and $3 million will require additional information under a simplified process.



Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh, said the bank's success will be measured by how quickly it can process viable applications, with the Government seeking a system that is simple and free of unnecessary bureaucracy.

The new institution therefore puts the emphasis not simply on lending money, but on opening access to formal financing for businesses that may previously have been unable to get through the door.

INAUGURAL BOARD TAKES THE HELM OF GUYANA DEVELOPMENT BANK



The new Board of Directors convening its meeting with the finance, public service and tourism ministers

The Bank has begun operations with a seven-member Board of Directors bringing together experience in banking, finance, business, law, governance and small-business development.

Abu Zaman chairs the board, with Kathy Smith serving as Deputy Chairperson. The members took office on October 5 and will serve an initial term ending December 31, 2027.

Zaman brings more than a decade of senior leadership experience in retail and small-business banking. He is Chief Administrative Officer of ENet, Chairman of the Small Business Council and Chairman of the Public Accountability and Oversight Committee of the Natural Resource Fund.

Smith, the first woman President of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry, is also Vice Chairperson of the Private Sector Commission and Chair of the Board of Industrial Training.

The remaining directors are Attorney-at-Law and Member of Parliament James Bond; Finance Secretary Sukrishnalall Pasha; Caribbean Airlines Sales Executive Dion Inniss; governance reform strategist and Competition and Consumer Affairs Commissioner Nalinie Singh; and SME developer Dr Praem Rambharak.

The board brings together public-sector, private-sector and financial expertise as the new institution begins offering financing to small and medium-sized businesses.

With the board now in place, the institution moves from legislation and preparation into its first operational phase, putting its financing model to the test while establishing the governance and systems needed to manage a major new source of SME credit.

FOR ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS, THE CAPITAL BARRIER MAY FINALLY BE COMING DOWN

For many aspiring entrepreneurs, the obstacle has never been a lack of ideas. It has been finding the money to turn those ideas into businesses.

That is why the Guyana Development Bank's offer of financing of up to $3 million without collateral or interest is attracting attention from prospective entrepreneurs who say access to capital has long been one of the hardest barriers to getting started.



Caleb Ally



Feliz Robertson



Marna Abrams

Caleb Ally sees the facility as a chance for small businesses to compete on more equal terms, particularly for entrepreneurs without the assets normally required by traditional lenders. He urged prospective borrowers to approach the opportunity seriously and ensure they have sound business plans.

For Chris Ali, the interest-free component has an additional significance. He said it provides a financing option for members of the Muslim community who avoid interest-based transactions, while potentially giving young Guyanese greater scope to establish businesses.

For others, the problem is more basic.

Feliz Robertson said lack of capital has prevented people from pursuing business ideas and said she is interested in using the opportunity to establish her own enterprise.

Marna Abrams similarly welcomed the initiative as a potential source of support for young people who may have the ambition to start businesses but lack the financial resources to do so.

Their experiences point to the gap the new institution is attempting to address: the distance between having a viable idea and having the financial means to execute it.

The bank is also offering mentorship, business planning and technical support, meaning applicants are being asked to bring more than an idea to the table.

The opportunity may open the door, but entrepreneurs will still have to walk through it, with viable plans, disciplined management and businesses capable of standing on their own.

AVIATION NETWORK TAKES OFF WITH THREE NEW INTERNATIONAL ACCORDS



Guyana and France renew aviation cooperation

Guyana is widening the pathways for international travel, trade and investment through new Air Services Agreements with Panama, France and Greece, expanding the country's reach into key regional and international markets.



Guyana and Panama signs air service agreement

Signed on the margins of the ICAO/EASA Global Forum for Aviation Safety in Georgetown, the agreements establish the legal and commercial frameworks needed for airlines to launch new services, access markets and increase the movement of passengers and cargo.

Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation, Deodat Indar signed the agreement with Panama alongside Captain Rafael Bárcenas Chiari, Director General of Panama's Civil Aviation Authority.

The accord grants airlines up to sixth-freedom traffic rights for passengers and seventh-freedom rights for cargo, providing greater flexibility for passenger and freight operations between Guyana, Panama and other destinations.



Guyana and Greece signs air service agreement

It also formalises the legal framework for COPA Airlines' daily Guyana-Panama service, which has operated since 2014 and serves as a major gateway linking Guyana to North, Central and South America.

Guyana and France also renewed and modernised their Air Services Agreement, originally signed in 1976. The updated accord covers airline operations, commercial opportunities, safety, security, tariffs, cooperative marketing and environmental considerations.

While there are currently no direct flights between the two countries, the agreement creates a platform for airlines to explore future services and commercial opportunities.

A third agreement with Greece establishes a framework for air transport cooperation, creating potential new links between Guyana and Europe while supporting business, tourism and people-to-people connections.

The agreements come amid significant growth in Guyana's aviation sector. The number of airlines serving the country has increased from four in 2020 to 16, while signed Air Services Agreements have risen from 13 to 27.

Together, the accords strengthen Guyana's position as an emerging aviation gateway and provide the foundation for expanded international connectivity as passenger traffic, trade and investment continue to grow.

CLEAN AVIATION PUSH GAINS MOMENTUM THROUGH DR PARTNERSHIP



Guyana and Dominican Republic forge partnership for sustainable aviation and decarbonisation

As air travel expands and new international routes emerge, Guyana is taking steps to ensure aviation growth is matched by environmental responsibility through a new partnership with the Dominican Republic focused on reducing emissions and advancing cleaner aviation technologies.

The two countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on aviation decarbonisation, creating a framework for cooperation on Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), emissions reduction initiatives and climate financing.

Minister Indar signed the agreement with Miguel Amaurys Mejia Capellan, Deputy Director of the Dominican Institute of Civil Aviation.

The accord aligns Guyana's aviation strategy with the International Civil Aviation Organization's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and the global objective of achieving net-zero carbon emissions from international aviation by 2050.

Beyond policy commitments, the partnership focuses on practical implementation. Both countries will collaborate on technical capacity building, the development of CORSIA-compliant Eligible Emissions Units and measures to prevent the double counting of emissions reductions under the Paris Agreement.

The agreement also establishes a mechanism for mobilising climate finance to support aviation decarbonisation projects and accelerate the adoption of Sustainable Aviation Fuels.

A Joint Working Group will oversee implementation and identify new opportunities for cooperation, with annual meetings scheduled to review progress.

As Guyana's aviation sector continues to expand, the partnership positions sustainability as a central pillar of future growth, ensuring that increased connectivity is accompanied by efforts to reduce the industry's environmental footprint.

UGANDA AGREEMENT TO HELPRAISE AVIATION STANDARDS



Guyana and Uganda deepen bilateral relations with signing of MoU for technical cooperation

Guyana is deepening international cooperation in aviation safety and regulation through a new agreement with Uganda aimed at strengthening technical expertise, modernising oversight systems and building institutional capacity.

The Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) and the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority (UCAA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing a framework for collaboration across critical areas of civil aviation management and oversight.

The agreement covers aviation safety surveillance, aircraft certification, personnel licensing, training, aerodrome management, airworthiness oversight and the implementation of State Safety Programmes and Safety Management Systems.

Signed by GCAA Director General Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Egbert Field, A.A., and UCAA Deputy Director General Mrs. Olive Birungi Lumonya, the accord provides for the exchange of technical expertise, specialist training, information sharing and joint initiatives designed to strengthen aviation capabilities in both countries.

The partnership also supports institutional development, human resource training and cooperation on the regulation and economic oversight of air transport, creating opportunities for both authorities to adopt best practices and enhance operational effectiveness.

Field said the agreement reflects a shared commitment to advancing aviation excellence.

"This collaboration paves the way for improved aviation safety and operational excellence. Through this MoU, we are taking decisive action to raise the bar for civil aviation in both Guyana and Uganda."

The accord adds another layer to Guyana's rapidly evolving aviation agenda, reinforcing the regulatory and safety systems that underpin a modern, internationally connected aviation sector.



Guyana and Uganda deepen bilateral relations with signing of MoU for technical cooperation

GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

AVIATION LAWS FACE OVERHAUL AS AIR TRAFFIC SURGES



President Ali addressing the global aviation forum

Guyana is moving to overhaul its aviation laws and regulations as passenger traffic, flights, airlines and aircraft numbers surge. President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has directed the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) to identify and close gaps in the country's regulatory framework.

The directive comes against a dramatic expansion of the sector. International passenger traffic has increased by 410 per cent, rising from 205,085 in 2020 to 1,046,130, while international flights climbed from 3,170 to 8,891 over the same period. Weekly airline seats have also risen from 12,952 to 35,160.

Opening the ICAO/EASA Third Global Regional Safety Oversight Organisations and Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organisations Forum in Georgetown, President Ali said growth must be matched by regulation capable of keeping pace with the increased complexity of the sector.



The third ICAOEASA Regional Safety Oversight Organisations (RSOOs) and Regional Accident and Incident Investigation Organisations (RAIOs) Conference at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

"Whatever we need to do to work backwards to reach those standards, we must invest in doing it so that we are at that standard," he said.

The President said the increase in aircraft, passengers and operators requires stronger inspection, certification and enforcement capacity, warning that aviation growth cannot be allowed to outpace safety oversight.

"That transformation will remain incomplete unless it is matched by an equally determined strengthening of regulation, safety oversight and enforcement," he said.

The expansion is being felt across the sector. Domestic passenger traffic has more than doubled, while overflights have increased by 146 per cent and aircraft on the national register have risen from 78 to 109.

President Ali also called for more consistent security and transit procedures across Caribbean airports and proposed a regional team to help countries address deficiencies identified through international safety audits.

"If one of our airports in the region does not meet the standard, it will affect all of us, because we're interconnected," he said.

With aviation activity accelerating on multiple fronts, the review is intended to ensure Guyana's regulatory, technical and enforcement capacity keeps pace with the country's emergence as a more significant regional aviation centre.

CJIA SET FOR BIGGER ROLE IN REGIONAL AND GLOBAL AVIATION



President Ali addressing the global aviation forum

Guyana is moving to convert its rapid aviation growth into a regional and global hub, with the Government preparing to finalise negotiations with a major international airline to use Terminal 2 at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) as a hub.

President Ali announced the move during the ICAO/EASA Global Aviation Safety Forum in Georgetown, saying Guyana is ready to conclude negotiations with airlines interested in connecting West Africa, South America and the Caribbean through Guyana.

"We are ready to finalise those negotiations," the President said, stressing the need for a major carrier to establish its hub at Terminal 2. The proposed hub comes as Guyana's aviation market has expanded sharply.

But the Government is also targeting the shortage of aviation professionals needed to support that growth.

President Ali said Guyana is seeking an international partner to establish an internationally accredited aviation education institution covering pilots, aircraft maintenance, safety and security.

Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation, Deodat Indar has separately said $100 million has been allocated in the 2026 National Budget to kick-start an Aviation Centre of Excellence, with an international partner being sought to help establish and operate the facility.

The initiative is intended to build a domestic pipeline of aviation professionals while serving wider regional demand.

Terminal 2, meanwhile, is being developed as a 150,000-square-foot facility and is expected to come on stream in 2028, increasing CJIA's capacity as Guyana's aviation market continues to grow.

Together, the hub, infrastructure and training initiatives point to a broader strategy of turning Guyana's expanding passenger traffic and geographic position into a platform for aviation connectivity, services and specialised employment.



Delegates from nearly 60 countries gathered in Georgetown for global aviation forum

CARIBBEAN PUSHES SHARED AVIATION SAFETY RESPONSE



Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation Deodat Indar

The Caribbean is moving towards a more coordinated aviation safety system as growing passenger traffic, expanding routes and shortages of specialised personnel place new demands on national regulators.

At the Caribbean High-Level Symposium on Aviation Safety in Georgetown, Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips called for sustained investment in oversight and greater regional cooperation to strengthen the capacity of aviation authorities.

He said individual states often struggle to maintain the full range of specialised personnel required for effective inspection, certification and surveillance, making the pooling of expertise increasingly important.

Guyana has proposed using the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS) to deepen cooperation, including shared technical expertise, joint training and greater consistency in licensing, certification and inspection. Guyana currently chairs CASSOS for the 2026–2028 term.

Prime Phillips said regional cooperation can allow states to meet technical needs they cannot readily staff individually, while creating more consistent standards for airlines operating across multiple jurisdictions.

The symposium examined a proposed CASSOS roadmap to 2035, regulatory harmonisation, financing and the development of specialised aviation skills.



Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips at the aviation forum

GUYANESE PASSPORT GAINS NEW GATEWAY TO SAUDI ARABIA



Guyanese can now access Saudi Arabia without US, UK or Schengen Visa

Guyanese passport holders can now travel to Saudi Arabia without first securing a United States, United Kingdom or Schengen visa, opening a new and more accessible gateway for business, tourism, religious travel and family visits.

Under the new arrangement, Guyanese travellers can obtain a Saudi electronic visa directly or secure a visa on arrival using their Guyanese passport, without going through an agent or visiting a Saudi Arabian embassy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation said Guyana is now the only country in South America whose passport holders can access the Saudi e-visa or visa-on-arrival facility without holding a valid visa from one of those third countries.

The change removes a significant barrier that previously restricted access to Saudi Arabia, particularly for travellers who did not already hold visas for the US, UK or Schengen Area.

The new facility is expected to benefit Guyanese travelling for Umrah, tourism, business, or to visit family and friends, while creating greater opportunities for people-to-people and commercial exchanges.

The ministry linked the development to the strengthening of bilateral relations and ongoing discussions with Saudi Arabia in areas including trade, investment, tourism and economic cooperation.

Coming as Guyana expands air links and pursues new international aviation partnerships, the development adds another dimension to the country's growing global mobility.

The government said it will continue upgrading the features of Guyana's Machine Readable Passports to meet international standards and further broaden travel opportunities for Guyanese.

GUYANA TAKES THE HELM OF CARIBBEAN AVIATION OVERSIGHT BODY



Guyana assumes regional leadership as CASSOS board

Guyana has assumed a leading role in shaping the future of Caribbean aviation, with Director General of the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority, Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Egbert Field, chairing the 29th Board of Directors Meeting of the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS) in Georgetown.

The meeting brought together representatives from all member states to address key priorities affecting regional connectivity, aviation safety and air transport growth. Discussions focused on the full implementation of the CARICOM Multilateral Air Services Agreement (MASA), measures to strengthen CASSOS's financial sustainability, organizational reforms and advancement of the One Stop Security initiative.

The outcomes are particularly significant for the Caribbean diaspora, as efforts to deepen regional aviation cooperation could support more efficient travel, stronger air links and improved movement across the region.



Guyana assumes regional leadership as CASSOS board

As the Caribbean's aviation oversight body, CASSOS plays a central role in maintaining safety and security standards among member states. Guyana's assumption of the Chairmanship for the 2026–2028 term further underscores the country's growing influence in regional transportation and integration initiatives.

With aviation becoming increasingly critical to trade, tourism and family connections, Guyana is now helping steer discussions that could shape the future of Caribbean travel.

KING CHARLES HEADS TO GUYANA FOR HIGH-LEVEL TALKS ON TIES, INVESTMENT AND CONSERVATION



King Charles to meet President Ali, Indigenous leaders as Guyana marks 60 years of UK ties

King Charles III will meet President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Indigenous leaders, British investors and young environmental advocates during a two-day visit to Guyana, as the country marks 60 years of diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom.

The King is scheduled to arrive on October 29 as part of his Autumn Tour from October 27 to November 4, which also includes The Bahamas and Antigua and Barbuda, ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

The visit will begin with a meeting between King Charles and President Ali at State House, followed by a state reception bringing together representatives of communities from across Guyana to commemorate six decades of bilateral relations.

On October 30, the King will attend a reception with British businesses operating in Guyana and local stakeholders, highlighting investment opportunities and economic cooperation as Guyana continues its rapid economic expansion.

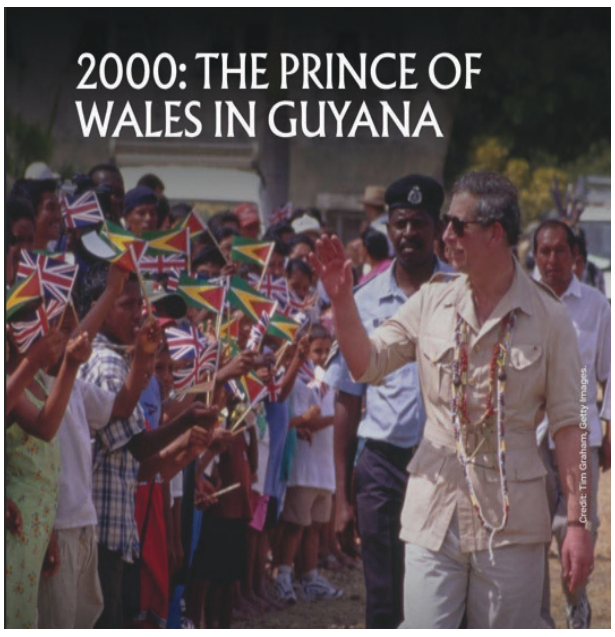
He will also visit the Georgetown (Rabbit Walk) Memorial, where, as patron of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, he will lay wreaths honouring the sacrifices of British, Guyanese and other Commonwealth forces. Veterans and other members of the Guyanese community will attend.

Indigenous leadership and environmental conservation will feature prominently in the programme. King Charles is scheduled to meet elected leaders of the National Toshaos Council and visit a Georgetown garden to learn about its botanical features and conservation initiatives.

The King will also meet young Guyanese involved in environmental clubs and sustainability projects, highlighting the role of the next generation in protecting the country's natural heritage.

Coinciding with the Global Biodiversity Alliance Conference, the visit will provide opportunities for engagement with scientists, Indigenous community members and innovators working in biodiversity protection, conservation and restoration.

The engagements will showcase the breadth of Guyana-UK relations, spanning diplomacy, investment, shared history and environmental stewardship, as Guyana prepares to welcome the Commonwealth head ahead of the regional summit.



MORE THAN 100 WITNESSES EXPECTED AS BARIMA INQUIRY OPENS OCTOBER 14



MV Barima COI continues to prepare for October 14 hearings

More than 100 witnesses are expected to provide evidence as the Commission of Inquiry into the sinking of the MV Barima begins formal hearings on October 14, launching a critical examination of the circumstances surrounding the July 18 maritime disaster.

The hearings will be held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre from Mondays to Fridays, with the five-member Commission expected to investigate whether failures in vessel operations, safety procedures or regulatory oversight contributed to the loss of life.

Commission Secretary Javed Shadick said potential witnesses include survivors, relatives of those who died, first responders and government officials.

The inquiry will examine how the vessel was loaded, how passengers boarded, conditions onboard, the vessel's seaworthiness and maintenance history, and the competence of its crew. It will also scrutinise the search, rescue and recovery operations and whether applicable laws, regulations and established procedures were followed.

Before the hearings begin, Commissioners have been inspecting facilities relevant to the investigation, including the Transport and Harbours Department's Kingston Wharf, the Maritime Administration Department (MARAD), and dry-dock facilities on the East Bank of Demerara.

At the Kingston Wharf, the team examined operational areas, including the bond and weighing scale, reviewed records and inspected the CCTV room. General Manager of the Transport and Harbours Department, Yurlander Hughes, facilitated the visit.

The Commissioners also boarded the MV Ma Lisha, which operates between Georgetown and Port Kaituma, and met privately with MARAD Director General Captain Stephen Thomas.

The preliminary visits are intended to familiarise Commissioners with the facilities, operational arrangements and records that may be relevant to testimony.

Community outreach sessions are also scheduled for Georgetown, Mabaruma and Port Kaituma, while the Commission is considering holding some hearings outside the capital. Shadick clarified that the outreach meetings are not formal evidence-taking sessions.

Although the inquiry was initially expected to conclude within two months, it is now projected to take approximately six months as Commissioners review submitted documents and hear testimony.

Members of the public with relevant information are being invited to come forward.

The investigation is expected to establish the sequence of events surrounding the sinking, identify any contributing failures and recommend measures to prevent a recurrence.

The formal hearings will mark the transition from preliminary information-gathering to the examination of evidence in a disaster that has left families and communities demanding answers.

BARIMA COMMISSION PLEDGES TO PURSUE TRUTH 'WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR'



Commissioners Rear Admiral Hayden Pritchard and Captain Hamada Fouda engaging a relative

For families who lost loved ones when the MV Barima sank on July 18, the Commission of Inquiry carries a responsibility that extends beyond establishing a timeline of events: it must examine the evidence, confront difficult questions and determine what can be learned from the disaster.

Chairman Justice Godfrey P. Smith has pledged that the five-member Commission will investigate independently, without prejudice or predetermined conclusions, as it seeks to establish the circumstances surrounding the tragedy.

"We approach our task with no predetermined view... and will inquire into all the circumstances around the sinking of the Barima, without fear or favour," Justice Smith said.

The Commission met approximately 120 survivors and relatives of those who died before the formal hearings, providing an opportunity for affected persons to share their experiences and concerns.

Acknowledging the pain and uncertainty facing families, Justice Smith cautioned that the inquiry may revisit difficult memories and that not every question will necessarily be resolved.

"We cannot promise that every question you may have will have an answer. But we will endeavour to find those answers," he told relatives.

The chairman explained that the Commission is not a criminal court. Its responsibility is to establish the facts, identify contributing factors and recommend measures to strengthen maritime safety.

"Our allegiance is to the law, our terms of reference, procedural fairness and, above all, to the truth as established by credible, tested evidence," he said.

That commitment will require the Commission to examine information impartially, determine which witnesses can assist its work and assess the evidence before reaching conclusions.

The inquiry will also seek to hear from the three crew members charged in connection with the tragedy, while respecting their legal rights and the requirements of procedural fairness.

Formal hearings are scheduled to begin on October 14 at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre.

BARIMA LOSS MUST LEAD TO SAFER SYSTEMS, STRONGER RESPONSIBILITY — PRESIDENT ALI



President Ali meeting with the relatives of the missing persons on MV Barima in Region One

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has called for the sinking of the MV Barima to become a turning point in how Guyana approaches safety, infrastructure and accountability, stressing that the loss of life must lead to lasting changes in the systems responsible for protecting citizens.

Reflecting on the July 18 disaster during an interview with journalist Fareeza Haniff, the President acknowledged the continuing emotional weight of the tragedy and the profound impact on families who lost loved ones.

"That tragedy continues to be a heavy weight. Still a lot of sleepless nights. It is something that I wish never happened," he said.

But President Ali stressed that while the lives lost cannot be restored, the country must ensure that the tragedy prompts a serious examination of its systems and responsibilities.

"We must build a new culture of safety, infrastructure, leadership and responsibility that would signal a new beginning for a stronger, deeper, more efficient system," he said.

The President also spoke about the obligations of leadership during a national crisis, arguing that responsibility cannot be limited to periods of success or routine governance.

"It happened. I'm the leader and a leader must not only be a leader in the good times. You have to be a leader in every circumstances, in every season. You have to be there," he said.

President Ali praised the doctors, uniformed services personnel and other Guyanese who responded under exceptionally difficult circumstances, highlighting their efforts during the immediate aftermath.

"I saw the doctors, our men and women in uniform, give their best. In that horrific, tragic period, I also saw the best in so many Guyanese," he said.

He also emphasised that the responsibility to affected families must continue beyond the emergency response. Support, he said, must address their emotional, spiritual, physical and material needs, with sustained engagement rather than attention limited to the immediate aftermath.

The President's comments come as a Commission of Inquiry prepares to begin formal hearings on October 14 to investigate the circumstances surrounding the vessel's sinking.

GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

THE DEBT CRISIS GUYANA INHERITED, AND THE REFORMS THAT CHANGED ITS COURSE



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali during his live statement

For Guyanese, today's headlines of rapid economic growth can obscure just how close the country once came to economic collapse. President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has sought to put that transformation into perspective, tracing Guyana's journey from default and severe indebtedness to an economy with substantially greater financial room.

In 1988, Guyana had enough foreign exchange to cover less than a week of imports and owed more than four times the value of its annual economic output. The country had stopped paying its creditors.

"Our creditworthiness was at its lowest. No one wanted to lend us money. We were defaulting on every payment," President Ali said in a recent live broadcast.

The crisis, he argued, reflected economic policy choices. Between 1971 and 1976, major industries including bauxite and sugar were nationalised, while the public sector expanded significantly. Falling productivity, loss-making enterprises and dependence on a narrow export base contributed to a growing reliance on borrowing.

Between 1976 and 1988, income per person fell 31 per cent, while government debt surged from 31 per cent to 475 per cent of GDP. By 1989, external debt alone stood at about 276 per cent of GDP.

When the PPP/C returned to office in 1992, total public debt was approximately 623 per cent of GDP, according to historical IMF data.

But the eventual turnaround was not simply a matter of debt being written off. Guyana entered the IMF-World Bank Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and undertook reforms involving taxation, procurement, budgeting, debt management and social spending.

Those measures helped unlock substantial international debt relief. In 1999, Guyana qualified for about US$410 million in nominal debt-service relief, while the net present value of relief was about US$256 million. In 2003, Guyana reached the enhanced HIPC completion point and secured another US$334.5 million in NPV debt relief.

The trajectory changed dramatically. Public debt fell from around 186 per cent of GDP in 2003 to 65 per cent by 2009 and approximately 48 per cent by 2015.

That history matters because Guyana's economic repositioning began before oil. **"This is long before oil,"** President Ali stressed, pointing to the reforms, debt restructuring and economic growth that preceded petroleum production.

Oil has since accelerated the transformation. Guyana's gross public debt stood at 24.3 per cent of GDP in 2024, and the IMF's 2025 assessment classified the country as being at low risk of overall and external debt distress, an improvement from its previous moderate-risk assessment.

The significance is more than the movement from one percentage to another. Guyana has moved from a position where lenders were unwilling to extend credit to one where its debt position and accumulated Natural Resource Fund assets provide considerably greater fiscal space.

PRIME MINISTER MOTTLEY TO HEADLINE 2027 GUYANA ENERGY CONFERENCE

Barbados' Prime Minister, Mia Amor Mottley will bring a strong regional perspective to the 2027 Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo, where she is set to join government leaders, investors and industry executives for discussions on energy, investment and the Caribbean's economic future.

Mottley will attend the four-day conference from February 16–19, 2027, in Georgetown, adding one of the Caribbean's most prominent voices on economic development, regional integration, climate resilience and energy security to the event.

Her participation comes as Guyana's expanding energy sector increasingly shapes conversations about investment, infrastructure and economic transformation across the wider Caribbean.

The 2027 conference will be held under the theme "Beyond Frontiers: Guyana's Energy Story", with discussions expected to examine opportunities emerging not only from the energy sector but across supply chains and other areas of the economy.



Prime Minister Mia Mottley to attend Guyana Energy Conference and Supply Chain Expo 2027

Mottley has been a leading advocate for greater regional cooperation and stronger financing mechanisms for developing and climate-vulnerable countries. Her participation is therefore expected to bring a broader Caribbean perspective to discussions on how the region can translate energy and investment opportunities into sustainable economic growth.

The conference will also bring together policymakers, international investors, entrepreneurs and businesses to explore partnerships, innovation and greater local participation.

Organisers said additional speakers and programme details will be announced ahead of the event.

The 2027 edition will build on the conference's role as a major platform for examining Guyana's expanding energy economy and its implications for investment, business and regional development.

RODRIGUES-BIRKETT MAKES CASE FOR A UN THAT ACTS, NOT JUST RESPONDS



H.E. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett on Egypt's Al-Qahera News Network

Guyana's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues Birkett, is calling for a UN that acts earlier, responds faster and delivers more effectively as conflicts, debt, climate change, food insecurity and inequality continue to test the international system.

Making the case for her candidacy for UN Secretary General in an interview with Egypt's Al Qahera News Network, Rodrigues - Birkett argued that reform of the world body can no longer be treated as optional.

"The question of reform has been answered with a loud yes that we need to reform the United Nations," she said, pointing to the ongoing UN80 process and the need to strengthen not only the Secretariat but also the organisation's agencies, funds and programmes.

At the heart of her vision is a stronger focus on prevention.

Rodrigues - Birkett said the UN cannot wait until tensions become full-scale conflicts before responding, noting that its extensive presence on the ground gives it access to information that could help identify emerging threats.

She said, if appointed Secretary General, she would be prepared to use the authority and tools available to her to intervene before crises spiral.

"As Secretary General, should I be appointed, I would certainly use all the tools at my disposal and not be afraid to take risks where those risks are worth taking," she said.

Her vision also places the economic pressures facing developing countries firmly on the global agenda.

Rodrigues - Birkett warned that countries struggling with high borrowing costs and mounting debt are being pushed deeper into financial vulnerability, making greater access to development financing critical.

"Too many countries are paying too much to borrow, which will further put them into debt," she said.

She also linked the world's major challenges, highlighting how conflict, climate change and food insecurity can reinforce one another and drive displacement and instability.

The ambassador called for greater participation by women in peace negotiations, stronger climate financing for vulnerable countries and international safeguards around artificial intelligence that protect people without stifling innovation.

For Rodrigues - Birkett, a stronger UN must ultimately be measured by its ability to prevent crises, advance development and translate international agreements into meaningful action.

Her candidacy comes as member states consider sweeping changes under UN80, placing the next Secretary General at the centre of efforts to determine whether the organisation can adapt to a rapidly changing world.

GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

ELECTION TRIAL:

HANDWRITING EXPERT STANDS BY SIGNATURE FINDINGS UNDER DEFENCE FIRE



Police Handwriting Expert Ameer Mohamed

A police handwriting expert stood by his conclusion that signatures appearing on disputed 2020 election documents were written by the same people who signed known comparison documents, despite sustained questioning from defence attorney Nigel Hughes.

Detective Inspector Ameer Mohamed told Principal Magistrate, Faith McGusty that his microscopic examination found common authorship between signatures bearing the names of former Chief Elections Officer Keith Lowenfield, APNU+AFC chief scrutineer Carol Smith-Joseph and former APNU+AFC counting agent Volda Lawrence and signatures on known documents.

The evidence places forensic handwriting analysis at the centre of the prosecution's case as it seeks to establish who authored signatures appearing on key election documents.

For Lawrence, Mohamed compared the signature on the Form 24 associated with the March 5, 2020 Region Four declaration with signatures on passport applications from 2010, 2015 and 2020. He maintained that they had a common author.

The Form 24 is significant because the March 5 declaration recorded 136,458 votes for APNU+AFC and 77,329 for the PPP/C. Forensic accountant Terrence Jaskaran separately testified that his comparison of certified Statements of Poll with the declaration showed 20,243 more APNU+AFC votes and 2,959 fewer PPP/C votes in the declaration. Those numerical findings remain evidence before the court, not a judicial finding of who caused the discrepancies.

Hughes challenged Mohamed on the methodology behind his conclusions, questioning specific handwriting characteristics and whether all observations had been recorded on his comparison charts.

The expert acknowledged differences between some signatures but described them as natural variations and maintained his overall conclusions.

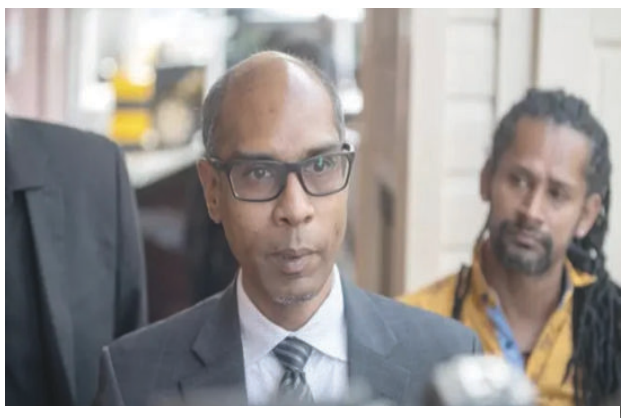
Mohamed was accepted by the court as an expert in handwriting analysis. His earlier testimony also covered signatures attributed to Lowenfield and Smith-Joseph on other election-related documents.



Special Prosecutor Latchmie Rahamat

The nine accused have pleaded not guilty. The trial is scheduled to resume on October 19

GIDDINGS ENDS TESTIMONY WITH FIRM DENIAL OF SERVER TAMPERING



Former Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) Information Technology Manager Aneal Giddings

Former GECOM Information Technology Manager, Aneal Giddings ended his testimony in the 2020 election fraud trial with a categorical denial that he, or anyone he permitted, accessed or altered an election server he secured during the March 5 bomb scare.

Under re-examination, Giddings maintained that the server was password-protected and that he kept control of the vehicle keys after placing it inside his locked vehicle outside the Ashmin's Building.

Asked directly whether he had accessed, altered or tampered with the server, he answered no. Asked whether he had permitted anyone else to do so, he again answered no.

The evidence followed weeks of questioning over what happened to election technology and Statements of Poll when tabulation was interrupted.

Giddings testified that he removed the server because he considered it his responsibility to protect GECOM's information. He said he secured it in his vehicle before proceeding to the muster point after the building was evacuated.

He also maintained that his team's tabulation of Statements of Poll belonging to then Chief Elections Officer Keith Lowenfield was separate from the process through which the Region Four Returning Officer was expected to generate the official declaration.

Earlier in his testimony, Giddings said documents supplied for publication on GECOM's website later contained differences in vote figures, including approximately 400 fewer APNU+AFC votes and 100 fewer PPP/C votes. He also testified that a comparison following the national recount showed approximately 19,000 fewer APNU+AFC votes than the earlier declared figures.

The defence had challenged Giddings over his handling of the server and election materials, including whether he had authority to retain Statements of Poll after tabulation stopped.

His evidence has now concluded, with the trial adjourned until October 19.

PRESIDENT ALI PLEDGES TO USE THE REST OF HIS TERM TO BRING GUYANESE CLOSER TOGETHER



President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali

Guyana's economic transformation will mean little if its benefits cannot reach ordinary citizens, President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali said, pledging to spend the remainder of his term taking his One Guyana message directly to communities across the country.

In a national address marking the 34th anniversary of the October 5, 1992 elections, President Ali argued that economic growth must ultimately be measured by whether it produces better lives, greater opportunity and a more secure future.

"It is not enough to grow. We must grow together. It is not enough to build. We must build a society in which every Guyanese feels that there is a place for them," he said.

He said the One Guyana vision does not require citizens to surrender political differences, but to reject the idea that political disagreement must divide the nation.

The President also warned against the use of social media to fuel hatred and division, urging citizens to tell their own stories and participate in building the country's future.

President Ali placed today's development gains against the backdrop of Guyana's condition before the restoration of free and fair elections. By 1989, external debt had reached about 925 per cent of GDP, while debt servicing between 1986 and 1990 averaged 153 per cent of fiscal revenue.

He said the resulting crisis left schools, hospitals, roads, water systems and public institutions starved of resources.

Yet, despite violence surrounding the 1992 vote, the election proceeded and then-President Desmond Hoyte accepted defeat.

"The mob did not defeat the ballot. The violence did not defeat democracy. The past did not defeat the future," President Ali declared.

The PPP won 28 of 53 parliamentary seats and 53.5 per cent of the vote.

Ali said the subsequent gains in infrastructure, education, health and housing demonstrate why democracy matters to development.

"**Democracy is not an ornament to development. It is one of its foundations**," he said.

He now plans to spend the next four-plus years visiting villages and communities, seeking to turn economic growth into a more shared national experience.

IMF RAISES GUYANA'S 2026 GROWTH OUTLOOK ABOVE GOVT FORECAST

Guyana's economy is projected to grow by 22.3 per cent in 2026, exceeding the Government's own forecast of 20.8 per cent as rising oil production and strong activity across major sectors continue to drive economic expansion.

The projection is contained in the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) latest Article IV assessment, placing its full-year growth outlook 1.5 percentage points above the estimate outlined in the Government's September Mid-Year Report.

The Government had reported estimated economic growth of 33.3 per cent during the first half of 2026, supported by a 41.3 per cent expansion in the oil and gas sector, 40.7 per cent growth in mining and quarrying, and a 24.7 per cent increase in construction.

The non-oil economy also recorded growth of 10.1 per cent during the first six months, with the Government projecting a 10.2 per cent expansion for the full year.

The IMF's assessment points to continued strength across the economy, following growth of 19.3 per cent in 2025. Petroleum production has exceeded 900,000 barrels per day, while the Fund expects non-oil gross domestic product (GDP) to expand by 10.2 per cent in 2026.



Guyana's economy continues to grow rapidly, driven by strong oil and non-oil activity, with the outlook remaining highly favorable

Over the medium term, non-oil growth is projected to average approximately seven per cent, supported by continued economic activity and public investment.

Guyana's expanding petroleum industry has also strengthened its financial position. The Natural Resource Fund (NRF) held approximately US$4.29 billion at the end of June, according to the Mid-Year Report, while the IMF reported that gross international reserves reached approximately US$1.4 billion at the end of 2025.

The Fund expects new oil fields coming onstream to further strengthen the country's fiscal and external positions. It also identified the Gas-to-Energy project as an important initiative expected to reduce reliance on fuel-based electricity generation, lower energy costs and improve competitiveness.

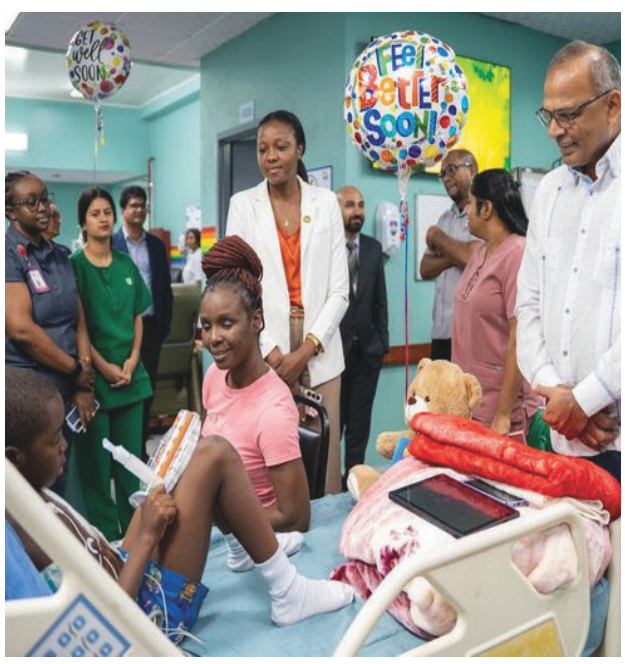
However, the growth outlook comes alongside continuing cost-of-living pressures. The Government's Mid-Year Report recorded a 6.7 per cent increase in food prices during the first half of the year, while the IMF projects average inflation of 4.1 per cent for 2026.

The IMF also expects the fiscal deficit to widen somewhat this year before improving in 2027. It recommended stronger long-term fiscal planning, closer oversight of public spending and continued attention to public-sector financial reporting, procurement compliance and outstanding cost-oil audits.

Climate resilience, food security and economic diversification were also identified as priorities as Guyana seeks to sustain growth and manage the risks associated with oil-price volatility.

The IMF described the country's economic fundamentals as strong, with the outlook supported by rising petroleum output and continued expansion in non-oil activity.

13 CHILDREN RECEIVE LIFE-CHANGING HEART PROCEDURES AT GPHC



Minister of Health Dr Frank Anthony interacting with one of the patients

Thirteen Guyanese children born with heart conditions have received specialised treatment at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), giving many of them a renewed chance at healthier and more active lives.

The children benefitted from 16 advanced paediatric cardiac procedures carried out between September 28 and October 2 through a collaboration between GPHC and a team of specialists from Apollo Hospitals in India.

The procedures included 10 complex open-heart surgeries, three catheter-based device closures and three diagnostic catheterisations. Several patients underwent testing before receiving corrective surgery.

The initiative forms part of ongoing efforts to ensure children with congenital heart defects can access highly specialised care in Guyana rather than travelling overseas for treatment.

The programme also strengthened local capacity, with more than 50 GPHC healthcare professionals working alongside the visiting cardiac team during the procedures.



The team of healthcare professionals who lead the paediatric heart surgeries

PRESIDENT LAUNCHES MONTHLY CHALLENGE TO GET FATHERS COOKING



President holds a fresh mango picked from his garden

Fatherhood is being placed firmly inside the home, not just as a provider's role, but as active participation in everyday family life.

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has launched a "Father's Challenge", calling on fathers across Guyana to spend at least two hours each month preparing a meal for their families.

Leading by example, the President issued the challenge while preparing chicken curry at his Leonora, Region Three home, using produce grown in his own yard.

"At least one time every month, every father in the kitchen for two hours preparing one meal," he said.

The initiative is designed to encourage fathers to become more involved in household responsibilities while creating opportunities for families to spend time together.

President Ali also used the demonstration to promote healthier eating and home gardening, showcasing locally grown bora, tomatoes, peppers, eschallots, thyme, ochro, carilla, celery and lettuce.

The message extends beyond cooking. By encouraging fathers to prepare food, grow produce and participate more directly in the home, the initiative seeks to make family involvement a regular practice rather than an occasional gesture.



President holds a fresh mango picked from his garden

GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

ALL 10 REGIONS PUT HEALTH, EDUCATION GAPS DIRECTLY BEFORE PRESIDENT ALI



President Ali meeting with the regional officials at the Baridi Benab, State House

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has moved to cut through administrative bottlenecks affecting health and education services, issuing on-the-spot instructions to regional officials responsible for delivering those services across Guyana.

The President met with Regional Executive Officers, Regional Education Officers and Regional Health Officers from all 10 administrative regions at the Baridi Benab, State House, where officials brought their respective challenges directly to him.

The engagement focused on what is happening beyond policy and investment, how efficiently services are reaching citizens, where systems are breaking down and what changes are needed to close those gaps.

Rather than treating the issues as isolated regional problems, the meeting allowed the administration to examine service delivery across the country and identify systemic changes that could improve access to healthcare and education.

One area already showing measurable change is the health sector, where digital solutions have been introduced to improve the movement of drugs and medical supplies to hospitals and health centres. The systems are intended to speed up replenishment and reduce delays in getting essential supplies to patients.

The intervention builds on the administration's wider push to make regional service delivery more responsive. In an earlier engagement with regional health and education officials, President Ali had stressed reducing the time and cost involved in accessing government services and holding programme heads accountable for delivery.



President Ali meeting with the regional officials at the Baridi Benab, State House

RISING LABOUR DEMAND DRIVES MIGRATION POLICY RETHINK



Over 1,500 Guyanese were conneceted to career opportunities ar a recent job fair

Guyana is developing a new migration policy to help meet the labour demands of an economy expanding faster than the domestic workforce can supply, President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali said.

Speaking in a special interview with journalist Kiana Wilburg on Guyana-Qatar relations, Ali pointed to the construction sector as an immediate example of Guyana's growing reliance on foreign workers.

"Can you imagine a construction sector without the foreign workers now?" he asked.

The President said Guyana's geographic distance from major labour markets makes its situation different from Qatar, which has long drawn workers from nearby countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines and China.

"**Here in Guyana, we are far away from large labour markets, but as a matter of necessity, we now have labour that is being imported,**" he said.

President Ali said he expects the volume of people entering Guyana for business, work and leisure to increase significantly by 2030, creating additional demand for labour, services and infrastructure.

"I see an economy by 2030 where at least three million people will be passing through this economy," he said.

He said the migration framework must also anticipate new industries as Guyana brings natural gas onshore and develops projects including a large-scale urea plant, alumina production and hyperscale data centres.



Over 1,500 Guyanese were conneceted to career opportunities ar a recent job fair

"We have to have a flexible, dynamic, modern migration policy to deal with what would be our needs and requirements in the future," President Ali said.

At the same time, the President said Guyanese living overseas remain an important part of the country's human-capital strategy, with many already returning to establish businesses and participate in the expanding economy.

The proposed policy is therefore expected to address both the demand for international labour and the return and reintegration of Guyanese seeking opportunities at home.

NIAGARA COLLEGE HELPS SHAPE TRAINING FOR GUYANA'S GROWING TOURISM SECTOR



The Ministers engaging Niagara College on HTTI Curricula Development

The Government of Guyana is moving to ensure its new hospitality training system is built around the jobs the country's expanding tourism industry will need, with international experts helping shape the curriculum for the Hospitality and Tourism Training Institute (HTTI).

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, is working with Niagara College of Canada to develop programmes that combine international standards with the practical requirements of Guyana's tourism and hospitality sector.

The collaboration comes as construction and equipping of the HTTI at Port Mourant, Region Six, progresses, positioning the institute to become a major pipeline for skilled workers entering the industry.

During Niagara College's first in-country stakeholder mission from September 28 to October 2, its team consulted government agencies, educators, employers and industry stakeholders to identify the skills employers need now, and those likely to be demanded as the sector grows.

Proposed training areas include hospitality operations, culinary arts, food and beverage services, tourism and resort operations, customer service and other technical competencies. The programme development is also examining work-integrated learning and emerging technologies, creating pathways that can move students from classroom training into actual industry experience.

Education Minister, Sonia Parag and Tourism, Industry and Commerce Minister, Susan Rodrigues led discussions with the Canadian team, underscoring the cross-sector approach to developing the institute.

The objective is bigger than opening another training facility. The government wants HTTI graduates to enter the workforce with competencies that match the standards of a tourism industry increasingly positioned to attract international visitors and investment.

The Ministry of Education is also working with secondary schools and TVET institutions to create stronger pathways into hospitality and tourism training, helping build a workforce capable of supporting the sector's expansion from the ground up.

PRESIDENT ALI CHALLENGES CARIBBEAN TO SCALE UP TOURISM INVESTMENT



The official launch of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation's (CTO) State of the Tourism Industry Conference

The Caribbean can no longer depend on its beaches, forests and natural beauty to remain competitive in a rapidly changing global tourism market, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has warned.

Addressing the opening of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation's State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) in Georgetown, President Ali called on governments, investors and tourism businesses to "scale up" their thinking, infrastructure and investment.

He said the region's ability to grow tourism at scale depends on building the infrastructure and connectivity to support a more integrated tourism product.

"The only thing that can take us forward by scale is integrated infrastructure, starting with an integrated transport system," he said.

Pointing to major investments in the Gulf, Latin America and elsewhere, the President said Caribbean destinations must similarly build tourism ecosystems rather than operate in isolation.

For Guyana, he highlighted the expansion of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, new regional airports at Lethem and Berbice, a planned deep-water port, road links and new urban development as examples of infrastructure being built alongside the country's tourism ambitions.

He also challenged investors to look beyond what nature has already provided, suggesting that Guyana could develop attractions such as a world-class tropical forest night safari.

"The future is going to be completely different," President Ali said, urging the region to invest in innovation, technology and resilience.

He called for disaster preparedness and business continuity to be built into tourism projects from the outset, while encouraging greater regional cooperation on supply chains, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce Susan Rodrigues echoed the call for greater collaboration, saying Caribbean destinations should treat their diversity as a collective strength.

"The future of Caribbean tourism is collaborative," Rodrigues said, highlighting stronger air connectivity, tourism intelligence sharing, destination linkages and joint marketing.

Guyana's tourism sector is already expanding, with 360,623 visitor arrivals recorded during the first nine months of 2026, following a record 453,489 arrivals in 2025.

Minister Rodrigues also pointed to 12 new airlines entering the market since 2020, nine internationally branded hotels and more than 18 major conferences and business events hosted in Guyana this year.

She said the growth must translate into opportunities beyond hotels and tour operators, including for farmers, fishermen, drivers, tour guides, artisans, entertainers and small businesses.

SOTIC 2026, held in Guyana for the first time under the theme "Tourism Futures: Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive," brought together regional tourism leaders, investors and industry stakeholders to examine the future of the sector.

VISA BARRIERS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY OF CARIBBEAN CONNECTIONS – PRESIDENT ALI



President Ali calling for faster, digital visa processing to strengthen travel and partnerships

Visa barriers are making it harder for people to move around the Caribbean and build the business, tourism and personal connections the region needs, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali has said.

Speaking at the opening of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation's State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) in Georgetown, President Ali called for faster, digital visa systems to make travel easier for tourists, businesspeople and regional partners.

He said cumbersome visa processes are hindering not only tourism, but also business relationships, conferences, professional exchanges and international partnerships.

The President pointed to Caribbean travellers who require European visas and may have to travel to Trinidad and Tobago or Suriname to submit applications, sometimes waiting days for an appointment before they can travel.

"The modern world can't be that complicated. You can get the biometrics of anybody...in a couple of seconds," he said.

President Ali contrasted this with parts of the Gulf, where electronic visas and frequent flights allow travellers to move between countries with fewer barriers.

"You can't build partnership and friendship like that," he said.

He argued that easier movement should be treated as an essential part of the region's tourism infrastructure, alongside airports, roads, ports and air links.

Easier visa processing could make it simpler for Guyanese and other Caribbean nationals to travel for family visits, business, conferences, cultural events and professional opportunities, particularly when applying for a visa currently requires travelling to another country.

President Ali said the region ultimately needs a tourism network in which destinations complement one another and people can move more easily between them, strengthening the connections that underpin regional tourism, business and cooperation.

NEW GUYANA-JAMAICA AGREEMENT TARGETS TOURISM INVESTMENT, TRAINING AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Guyana and Jamaica are moving to deepen tourism cooperation, with a new bilateral agreement targeting investment, stronger air connectivity and skills development to expand opportunities for businesses and workers across both countries.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed during the State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) 2026 in Guyana, establishes a framework for the two Caribbean nations to share expertise, strengthen industry partnerships and encourage travel between their destinations.

Guyana's Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues, and Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett, signed the agreement at Atlantic Suites by Hyatt, in the presence of senior tourism officials and Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) Secretary-General and CEO Dona Regis-Prosper.



Guyana and Jamaica sign tourism pact to deepen regional integration and unlock new opportunities

The agreement identifies tourism investment, aviation links, education and training, sustainability and resilience as key areas for collaboration, creating avenues for both destinations to build on their respective strengths.

Minister Rodrigues said the partnership would allow both countries to learn from each other's experiences, strengthen connections among tourism stakeholders and create benefits for their people and the wider Caribbean.

For Jamaica, the agreement also presents an opportunity to integrate Guyana's emerging tourism product more closely into the regional market.

Bartlett said Guyana's forests, valleys and natural heritage could add value to the Caribbean's tourism offering, particularly through multi-destination travel. He stressed that regional tourism strategies must look beyond visitor arrivals and focus on retaining more economic value within local communities.

The partnership comes as Guyana works to strengthen its position as a competitive, sustainable destination.

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Fresh Corn 玉米 Reg:$3.99 — 2.99/pk

Mini Cucumber 迷你青瓜 Reg: 2 for $5.00 — 2/$3.00

Bosc Pear 波士啤梨 Reg:$1.59 — 99¢/lb

Australia Orange 澳洲橙 Reg:$1.99 — 1.29/lb

Golden Apple 黃蘋果 Reg:$2.59 — 1.59/lb

Cantaloupe 粗皮瓜 Reg:$4.99 — 2.99/ea

Green Grape 青提 Reg:$4.99 — 2.99/lb

Blueberry 藍莓 Reg:$7.99 — 3.99/pk

Honey Pomelo Red Meat 中國紅肉蜜柚 Reg: 2 for $7.00 — 2/$5.00

Gold Kiwi 2Lb 黃金奇異果 Reg:$9.99 — 7.99/pk

RESTAURANT SPECIAL

Cabbage 椰菜 — 19.00/case

Crown Broccoli 西蘭花 — 28.00/case

Lemon 18kg 黃檸檬 — 35.00/case

Spanish Onion 大洋蔥 — 37.00/bag

Chinese Eggplant 中國茄瓜 — 45.00/case

Green Onion 蔥 — 55.00/case

Head Lettuce 24S 圓生菜 — 75.00/case

Avocados 36S 牛油果 — 50.00/case

Head On Shrimp 30/40 有頭白蝦 24Lb — 120.00/case

Headless White Shrimp 無頭白蝦 21-25 10X4Lb — 210.00/case

Frozen Pacific White Shrimp 91/110 10x4Lb 精選白蝦 — 155.00/case

Triple Crown Vegetable Spring Roll 春卷 10x1000g — 40.00/case

Extra Large Egg 箱裝大鷄蛋 — 56.99/case

Beef Sirloin Tip 牛肚肉整箱 — 7.50/lb

Beef Eye Round 牛肉眼整箱 — 7.50/lb

Fresh Chicken Leg Quarter 18kg 新鮮鷄大腿 — 77.99/case

Pork Stomach 10kg 猪肚 — 30.00/case

Chicken Breast 鷄胸肉 25kg — 280.00/case

Pork Intestine 猪大腸 10kg — 50.00/case

Saporito Vegetable / Canola Oil 16L 菜油/菜籽油 — 43.99/case

Mr. Goudas Long Grain Rice 黃米 20kg — 32.99/bag

Dunya Long Grain White Rice 20kg 優質白米 20kg — 29.99/bag

P.R.B Monosodium Glutamate 50Lb 珠江橋牌味精 — 49.99/bag

Redpath Sugar 20kg 白糖 — 26.99/bag

ADM All Purpose Flour 面粉 20kg — 20.99/bag

LKK Chun Oyster Flavoured Sauce 李錦記錦珍鮮味蠔油 6x2.2Kg — 37.99/case

TS-018 MFPP Clamshell Container 200pcs 餐盒 — 17.99/case

PP-881 MFPP Clamshell Container 150pcs 餐盒 — 24.99/case

PP-993 MFPP Clamshell Container 150pcs 餐盒 — 29.99/case

YS-64 Microwavable Plastic Soup & Deli Container 120sets 帶蓋湯盒 — 39.99/case

S-32 Microwavable Plastic Soup & Deli Container 240sets 帶蓋湯盒 — 39.99/case

S-24 Microwavable Plastic Soup & Deli Container 240sets 帶蓋湯盒 — 32.99/case

CN-38W Microwavable Container 150sets 帶蓋餐盒 — 29.99/case

868 Microwavable Container 150sets 帶蓋餐盒 — 25.99/case

PC-10 Portion Containers 餐盒 2500pcs — 16.99/case

FROZEN

Cool Ocean White Shrimp 速凍蝦 20/30 400g Reg:$7.99 — 5.99/ea

Clear Ocean Frozen Cooked Scallop On Half Shell 3Lb 扇貝 Reg:$29.99 — 25.99/ea

Golden Sea Brand Sardine Fish 800g 沙丁魚 Reg:$5.99 — 3.99/ea

Kababayan Grated Purple Yam 454g 紫薯碎 Reg:$3.99 — 2.99/ea

BVB Peeled Sugarcane Stick 皮甘蔗棒 500g Reg:$3.99 — 2.99/ea

Sanford Greenshell Mussels 紐西蘭半殼青口 800g Reg:$12.99 — 9.99/ea

Bulacan Sweet/Hot Longanisa 375g 菲律賓香腸 Reg:$4.99/ea — 2/$6.88

JF Frozen Durian 400g 金枕頭榴蓮肉 Reg:$11.99 — 7.99/ea

Black Tie Frozen Squid Ring 爽口魷魚圈 260g Reg:$4.99/ea — 2/$5.50

DIWA Black Bean 227g 黑豆 Reg:$5.99 — 3.99/ea

Wing Wing Chinese Style Sausage 375g 榮榮臘腸 Reg:$6.99 — 4.99/ea

Extra Large White Egg 30s 30粒散裝大白鷄蛋 Reg:$11.99 — 9.99/pk

GROCERY

Maseca Instant Corn Masa Flour 1.8kg 玉米面 Reg:$8.99 — 5.88/ea

Ekono Sea Salt 700g 鹽 Reg:$1.59 — 99¢/ea

Realemon Lemon Juice 檸檬汁 945ml Reg:$3.99/ea — 2/$5.00

Grace Soup Mix 60g 湯包 Reg:$1.29/ea — 3/$2.00

Grace Festival Mix 270g 炸粉 Reg:$1.99 — 1.29/ea

Grace Jerk Seasoning Series 調味醬 284g Reg:$5.99 — 3.29/ea

NuPak Mackerel In Hot Tomato Sauce 155g 馬鮫魚罐頭 Reg:$0.99/ea — 2/$1.00

Hereford Corned Beef 340g 牛肉罐頭 Reg:$5.99 — 2.99/ea

Y&Y 3 Minute Chow Mein 三分鐘炒面 454g Reg:$2.99 — 1.79/ea

Hyper Malt Malt Drink 飲料 4x250ml Reg:$2.99 — 1.88/ea

Nuyo Yogurt Flavored Drink 乳酸菌飲料 4x100ml Reg:$1.99 — 1.29/ea

Veit Choice Bun Bo Hue 越南順化米粉 908g Reg:$5.99 — 3.69/ea

Nongshim Oolongmen Instant Noodle Series 農心烏龍面/辛拉面 6pkx75g Reg:$9.99 — 7.99/pk

Jufran Banana Sauce 550g 香蕉醬 Reg:$2.99 — 1.88/ea

White King Fiesta Spaghetti Sauce Series 1kg 意面醬 Reg:$4.99 — 2.59/ea

Jamaica Pride Dry Sorrel 洛神花 100g Reg:$2.99 — 1.88/ea

Trung Nguyen House Blend Coffee 500g 咖啡 Reg:$8.99 — 6.59/ea

Royale Bathroom Tissue 厠紙 15=30rolls Reg:$15.99 — 8.99/pk

MEAT

Pork Chop 猪扒 Reg:$3.59 — 2.29/lb

Pork Back Ribs 猪肉排 Reg:$4.99 — 3.99/lb

Pork Eye Round 猪肉眼 Reg:$3.59 — 2.59/lb

Beef Flank 牛腩 Reg:$7.99 — 6.99/lb

Frozen Whole Rabbit (Without Head And Feet) 冰鮮兔子 Reg:$7.59 — 6.59/lb

Chicken Wing 鷄翅 Reg:$3.99 — 2.59/lb

SEAFOOD

Fresh Sea Bream 新鮮海銀立 Reg:$8.99 — 7.99/lb

Fresh Chinese Yellow Croaker 新鮮大陸黃花魚 Reg:$5.99 — 4.99/lb

Fresh Mullet 新鮮烏頭魚 Reg:$3.99 — 2.99/lb

Live Blue Crab 生猛藍蟹 Reg:$5.99 — 3.99/lb

Pre Frozen Squid 冰鮮魷魚 Reg:$7.99 — 6.99/lb

Frozen Fresh Head-On White Shrimp 冰鮮有頭南美蝦 Reg:$6.99 — 5.99/lb

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GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

A CARIBBEAN GATHERI

From the warmth of a State House reception to the vibrant rhythms of Cultural Night, Guyana welcomed the Caribbean and the world for SOTIC 2026, bringing tourism leaders, investors, innovators and young talent together for a week of connection, discovery and collaboration.

Hosting the State of the Tourism Industry Conference for the first time, President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali and First Lady Arya Ali welcomed regional delegates to State House, setting the stage for conversations on a stronger, more connected and sustainable Caribbean tourism industry.

At Atlantic Suites by Hyatt, regional leaders explored the future of tourism, with President Ali calling for greater ambition, strategic investment and a shared vision for the sector. Young voices shone at the Regional Tourism Youth Congress, while discussions on Indigenous tourism highlighted the importance of protecting cultural heritage, biodiversity and community livelihoods.

Investment meetings, business networking and showcases by Guyanese vendors brought the country's tourism potential to life, connecting delegates with local products, enterprise and opportunity.

The week culminated in Cultural Night, where Guyana's music, traditions, flavours and creativity offered visitors an unforgettable taste of the destination.






















A GUYANESE WELCOME













































Guyana's accommodation capacity to approach 6,000 rooms

GUYANA'S tourism sector is poised for further growth, with the country's accommodation capacity projected to approach 6,000 rooms by the end of 2026, as increased hotel investment positions the destination to welcome more visitors and accommodate a growing conference and leisure travel market.

Director of the Guyana Tourism Authority, Kamrul Baksh, outlined the sector's expansion while addressing the State of the Industry Conference (SOTIC) 2026, noting that the country's room stock has grown significantly from the relatively small number of rooms available in 2020.

The expansion has been supported by increased investment in the hospitality industry, including the entry of international hotel brands such as Hyatt, AC by Marriott, Four Points by Sheraton and others, alongside the development of additional accommodation properties.

The director said a further 15 hotels are expected to come on stream after 2026, signalling continued growth in the country's capacity to accommodate visitors.

The increased room stock is particularly important as Guyana strengthens its meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) market.

Baksh noted that the country hosted more than 20 conferences and exhibitions during 2026, attracting significant numbers of visitors and generating business for restaurants, bars and other tourism-related services.

The expansion of accommodation is also expected to support the growth of leisure travel and diaspora tourism, while providing greater capacity to accommodate visitors attending major events and exploring Guyana's natural and cultural attractions.

He emphasised that the development of the sector must be matched by improvements in service delivery and workforce capacity to ensure that visitors receive quality experiences.

"At the heart of this, Guyana is at a place where we need to upscale our human capacity" he stated.

In this regard, the Hospitality and Tourism Institute is expected to be completed by the end of 2026, providing an important foundation for developing the skilled workforce required to support the expanding industry.

He also highlighted the introduction of approximately 80 new tours and experiences across Guyana over the preceding six years, developed in collaboration with the private sector to give visitors more opportunities to explore the country.

As hotel investment continues and new tourism products enter the market, Guyana is positioning itself to accommodate increased visitor demand while strengthening the infrastructure, services and human resources needed to sustain long-term tourism growth.

ADVOCATE • JOURNALIST • LEADER

Hello Neighbours,

I'm Maria Voutsinas, and I'm running to be your City Councillor here in Ward 14, Toronto–Danforth. I raised my family here, and I love the diversity, cultures and small businesses that make our community feel like home. Like you, I have watched our city change. The cost of living keeps rising. Road congestion. Concerns about safety. I want to help find solutions we can all live with.

For over 20 years, I have served as Executive Director of the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada. From my office at City Hall, I have worked with all levels of government to ensure voices in diverse communities are heard. I know how the system works and how to turn advocacy into action.

I will be knocking on doors across Toronto–Danforth, listening to what matters to you and working to earn your support.

Let's build a safer, more affordable and more liveable community together.

Maria Voutsinas

VOTEMARIA.CA

Authorized by the official agent for Maria Voutsinas

Agriculture ventures account for 30% of development bank applications

AGRICULTURE, which is one of Guyana's fastest developing sectors, is slated to see continued growth through the Guyana Development Bank (GDB) and so far, it accounts for almost 70 per cent of the applications that have been received, according to Minister of Agriculture Zulfikar Mustapha.

Speaking on Monday at the Farmers' Conference 2026, the minister noted that the figures and growing interest are a result of work being done to ensure farmers know what financing is available to them and how they can qualify.

He said many producers do not need large sums but require access to smaller amounts that can help them invest in their operations and increase production. This collaborative approach and emphasis on providing opportunities for Guyanese, backed by strategic leadership, is part of the wider effort to strengthen Guyana's agricultural sector and its role in regional food security.

Highlighting the role of the president in regional agricultural leadership, the minister noted that with growing investment by farmers and continued regional engagement, Guyana's agriculture sector is positioned to contribute to wider efforts to reduce food imports and strengthen the Caribbean's food security.



The newly opened Development Bank

The Farmers' Conference 2026, which is slated to become an annual event, brought together farmers, agriculture stakeholders, and regional sectoral leaders. The conference served as a platform for farmers and stakeholders to share their challenges, views and opinions and help shape policies impacting the sector.

While work to further develop the sector continues, the minister noted that farmers are already leading in the number of applications currently being made to the Guyana Development Bank, with agricultural applicants accounting for almost 70 per cent of the total.

"Most of the applications are from the farming community, the agriculture sector," he said.

Mustapha credited the farmers' strong interest in sensitisation efforts made by the Ministry of Agriculture, which has been working to ensure producers understand the available financing and the requirements for accessing it. "Many farmers need not large sums of money, but they need some money to increase and invest in their buildings. The development bank is one of the areas, and we have done a lot of work in terms of propagating and informing them about what are the criteria to get loan…. And that is why you have almost 70 per cent of the applicants that are farmers," he said.

The minister's remarks come as the government continues to prioritise the agriculture sector in Guyana's national development agenda, with efforts focused on ensuring farmers can benefit from the country's economic growth.

Mustapha said the development of the sector requires continued engagement with the people who depend on it, noting that farmers' experiences, concerns, and participation must remain central to decisions affecting their livelihoods.

"As a government, we cannot make progress in agriculture without the farmers themselves. Their experience matters, their concerns matter, and their participation must remain an important part of the decisions that affect their livelihood. That is why gatherings such as this conference are so valuable. They bring people together, encourage dialogue and provide an opportunity to strengthen relationships among farming communities, the government, and the wider agricultural sector," he said.

He added that the government must ensure that agriculture remains an area where farmers can expand their businesses, young people can see opportunities for their future, and communities can benefit from greater economic activity.

Pres. Ali calls for regional strategies on AI, cybersecurity

PRESIDENT, Dr Irfaan Ali has urged Caribbean countries to develop shared strategies for artificial intelligence, digital resilience and cybersecurity, warning that no country in the Region is large enough to respond effectively on its own.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Caribbean Tourism Organization's State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) 2026, Ali said that digital technology was already shaping how potential visitors discovered destinations and formed expectations about travel.

"If you ask a young child in the Caribbean to tell you places of the world they want to see, they will give you their interpretation through what they get on social media on the devices, and also through what AI is demonstrating to them," he said.

President Ali argued that the Region needed to make better use of those technologies and work collectively to build the expertise and systems required.

"So, we have to leverage, and we are too small to leverage individually. We have to come up with an AI strategy for the Region, a cybersecurity strategy for the Region. Otherwise, we will not be adopting [sic]. We will not be flexible, nimble enough to make the changes that are essential for survival," the President said.

Without a coordinated approach, he warned, Caribbean destinations risked being too slow or insufficiently flexible to adapt to changes in the tourism market. He said regional cooperation would be important to ensure countries could adopt new tools and respond to emerging challenges.

Dr Ali also pointed to digital tourism initiatives abroad as examples of how technology could be used to attract visitors. Citing Qatar, he said people could experience aspects of the country from overseas through virtual shows and digital platforms designed to generate interest in travelling there.

He described digital tourism as part of a broader investment programme that included workforce development and integrated transport and tourism infrastructure.

He further urged Caribbean countries to develop a shared tourism vision for 2035, with the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) playing a central role in connecting the Region to new partners and markets.

President Ali said the Region should agree collectively on which major international events it wants to attract and build the infrastructure needed to host them.


President Irfaan Ali

"We can collectively decide that by 2035 there are 10 events that we want to bring to the Region," he said, noting that countries acting together would be better placed to compete for global events than those pursuing them individually.

President Ali said a longer-term plan should also reflect the scale of change under way in tourism and the wider global economy; governments and businesses, he said, needed to plan ahead and work together rather than rely on short-term or disconnected decisions.

He called on the conference to help set out a regional direction. "We need the conference to deliver to the people of the Region a vision to 2035, in which CTO places itself central to that vision," he said.

He said the organisation should help connect the Caribbean to new partnerships and markets and support the Region's integration with them.

The president emphasised to his audience that investments in transport and other infrastructure should be considered part of a wider regional system. He pointed to developments in other parts of the world, where countries were building connected tourism ecosystems, and argued that the Caribbean needed stronger links between destinations if visitors were to travel more easily across the Region.

REGION MUST PLAN TODAY FOR THE ENERGY DEMANDS OF TOMORROW – PM PHIILLIPS



The 11th Latin American and Caribbean Energy Organization (OLACDE) Energy Week in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Guyana has recorded a 623 per cent increase in installed renewable energy capacity since 2019, with G$37.7 billion invested in projects implemented or committed between 2020 and 2026, Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips has disclosed.

The figures highlight the scale of the country's energy expansion as Prime Minister Phillips called on Latin American and Caribbean leaders to strengthen regional cooperation and plan for electricity demand expected to rise with industrialisation, urbanisation and digitalisation.

Speaking during a Ministerial Dialogue at the 11th Latin American and Caribbean Energy Organization (OLACDE) Energy Week in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, the Prime Minister stressed that energy planning must extend beyond immediate needs to account for technological change, climate risks and future economic growth.

Guyana's installed renewable energy capacity has increased from 5.35 megawatts (MW) in 2019 to 38.72 MW in 2026. Based on projects committed through 2031, capacity is expected to reach 77.14 MW, nearly doubling the current level.

The investments include 13 utility-scale solar farms, 57 solar mini-grids, three hydropower plants, 37,730 solar home energy systems and 239 rooftop solar photovoltaic installations on public and community buildings.

PM Phillips said Guyana's energy strategy, guided by its Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030, combines natural gas with hydropower, solar, wind and other technologies to support economic development while maintaining environmental sustainability.

As an emerging oil and gas producer with approximately 85 per cent forest cover, Guyana must strategically manage its natural resources while accelerating the transformation of its energy system, he noted.



The 11th Latin American and Caribbean Energy Organization (OLACDE) Energy Week in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Natural gas is expected to help replace more carbon-intensive imported fuels used in electricity generation, strengthen energy security and support lower electricity costs. Renewable energy and battery storage will also remain important components of the country's evolving energy mix.

The Prime Minister further warned that artificial intelligence and expanding data-centre operations will increase electricity demand, requiring modernised grids, stronger cybersecurity and greater technical capacity. Digital technologies, he said, can also improve demand forecasting, predictive maintenance and the reliability of power systems.

He emphasised that the energy transition must deliver practical benefits to hinterland, riverine and Indigenous communities through more reliable and affordable electricity, employment, skills development and opportunities for local businesses.

PM Phillips called for closer regional collaboration on innovative financing, climate-resilient infrastructure and electricity interconnection where feasible.

He said countries must build energy systems capable of meeting future demands while balancing economic transformation, environmental protection and improved livelihoods.

GUYANA GAINS SEAT ON GLOBAL TRANSPARENCY BODY OVERSEEING EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES



Minister of Natural Resources, Vickram Bharrat

Guyana has secured a seat at one of the world's key decision-making bodies for natural resource governance, with Minister of Natural Resources Vickram Bharrat appointed to the Board of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) for the 2026–2029 term.

The appointment gives Guyana representation for Latin America and the Caribbean on the international board, placing the country directly in discussions shaping global standards for transparency and accountability in the extractive sector.

Minister Bharrat said Guyana's appointment provides an opportunity to bring the region's experiences to the global discussion while contributing to efforts to strengthen governance across extractive industries.

The EITI is a global standard for promoting transparency in the management of oil, gas, mining and other natural resources, bringing together governments, companies and civil society to improve accountability in the sector.

NEW 3.6KM ROAD ADVANCES ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO EASE WEST DEMERARA TRAFFIC



An aerial view of the upgraded roadway between Leonora and Stewartville

Motorists travelling along Guyana's West Coast Demerara corridor are moving closer to having an alternative to one of the region's key traffic bottlenecks, following the completion of a 3.6-kilometre road upgrade between Leonora and Stewartville.

The newly upgraded section forms part of the wider Tuschen-to-Ruimzeight alternative route, a government initiative aimed at improving connectivity, reducing travel delays and easing pressure on the West Coast Demerara Public Road.

For commuters, the long-term benefit is greater choice in navigating the growing West Demerara corridor, where expanding housing communities have increased demand on existing roads.

The Ministry of Public Works' Special Projects Unit completed the upgrade, while the Ministry of Housing is developing new road sections and interconnecting bridges to create a continuous alternative route.

The project requires the construction and rehabilitation of approximately 36 bridges, some of which will be widened and upgraded to accommodate the route.

During an inspection in August, SPU Head Collin Gittens said the initiative is intended to provide another road option while improving traffic movement and reducing travel time.

President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali inspected the alignment in May and said the Government was working to expand and connect existing roads from La Jalousie to Tuschen to address traffic bottlenecks.

The alternative corridor will complement the four-lane Crane-to-Parika highway, with the aim of diverting light traffic from the main West Demerara road.

The completed network is expected to give motorists travelling between the West Bank and West Coast of Demerara greater flexibility, particularly during peak hours.



An aerial view of the upgraded roadway between Leonora and Stewartville

Antigua and Barbuda to host CTO's State of the Tourism Industry Conference in 2027

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has announced that Antigua and Barbuda will host the 2027 State of the Tourism Industry Conference (SOTIC) Oct. 4-8, 2027, bringing the region's leading tourism forum to the twin-island nation.

The announcement was made during the final day of SOTIC 2026 in Georgetown, Guyana, where tourism ministers, commissioners and directors of tourism, private-sector executives, regional and international partners, academics, media, young people and other industry stakeholders gathered to examine the issues shaping Caribbean tourism.

"Antigua and Barbuda has demonstrated a strong commitment to tourism development and regional collaboration, and we look forward to bringing the Caribbean tourism community together there for SOTIC 2027," said Dona Regis-Prosper, secretary-general and CEO of CTO. "Each SOTIC gives us an important opportunity to examine the issues affecting our industry, share knowledge and strengthen the partnerships that will help Caribbean tourism remain competitive, sustainable and inclusive."



CTO Director of Research Aliyyah Shakeer and the A&B team at SOTIC

Charles "Max" Fernandez, Antigua and Barbuda's minister of tourism, civil aviation, transportation and investments and the newly elected CTO chairman, welcomed the announcement, saying the destination looks forward to hosting tourism leaders and partners from across the region and beyond.

"Antigua and Barbuda is honored to welcome the Caribbean tourism community for SOTIC 2027," Fernandez said. "We look forward to sharing the warmth and hospitality of our people while providing a setting for meaningful dialogue about the opportunities and challenges ahead.

"Hosting SOTIC will also allow us to showcase the continued evolution and advancement of our tourism product and the experiences that distinguish our twin-island destination. We are deeply committed to the Caribbean and to working with our regional partners to strengthen tourism as a force for shared prosperity, resilience and opportunity across our region."

"We are excited to welcome SOTIC to Antigua and Barbuda and to give delegates an opportunity to experience our destination while engaging in important conversations about the future of Caribbean tourism," said Colin James, CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority and chair of the CTO Board of Directors. "SOTIC brings together many of the people shaping tourism across our region, and we look forward to creating an environment that encourages collaboration, fresh thinking and meaningful connections while showcasing the people, culture and experiences that make Antigua and Barbuda distinctive."

Regis-Prosper thanked the government of Guyana and its tourism partners for hosting SOTIC 2026 and said the transition to Antigua and Barbuda reflects CTO's continued commitment to taking its flagship conference across the region.

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Opposition leader Azruddin Mohamed in handcuffs at Kitty

Opposition Leader, two others in custody after shooting incident at Kitty

Police are investigating an alleged discharge of a firearm with intent following an incident at Barr Street, Kitty, Georgetown, around 23:45 hrs on Monday, October 12, 2026.

The police said preliminary investigations, revealed that Senior Superintendent Prem Narine, Head of Special Branch, reported hearing what appeared to be a gunshot as a black Toyota Allion, bearing registration number PXX 5300, approached his residence.

He took cover and discharged several rounds from his service firearm in the vehicle's direction, after which it drove away.

The senior officer disclosed that he had previously seen the vehicle monitoring his residence.

The vehicle was later intercepted at the junction of Vlissengen Road and Sandy Babb Street, Kitty. Its occupants were identified as Opposition Leader Azruddin Mohamed, 39, Mario Mohamed, 25, and Eugene Thorne, 35, all of whom were arrested.

A search of the vehicle led to the discovery of an unlicensed .32 Taurus pistol without a serial number and three live rounds of ammunition. Police also recovered one .32 spent shell near the residence and four 9mm spent shells.

The firearm, ammunition and spent shells were lodged for ballistic examination, while CCTV footage is to be reviewed.

The three men remain in Police custody as investigations continue.



GOVT WEIGHS 120-DAY FUEL RESERVES, NORTHERN BRAZIL SUPPLY



President Ali at the press conference

Guyana is weighing a major expansion of its fuel storage capacity, with proposals ranging from 30 to 120 days of supply as the country faces rising import costs and rapidly growing energy demand.

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali said government is reviewing proposals for a national hub-and-spoke storage network, with a main fuel farm supported by smaller facilities in strategic locations including Lethem.

The infrastructure is being considered not only to strengthen domestic supply security but also to position Guyana to supply the northern Brazil market. President Ali said major players in the energy sector have raised the need for greater storage as Guyana develops into a regional energy hub.



The push comes against a sharp increase in the cost of imported refined fuel. According to the President, gasoline import costs have risen 51 per cent since January, while diesel used for power generation has increased 86.8 per cent.

He said the increases have not been passed on to consumers, with government instead increasing subsidies to Guyana Power and Light (GPL). The Finance Ministry is sourcing tens of billions of dollars to meet GPL's higher fuel bill.

At the same time, energy requirements are expanding beyond the national grid, with the President noting that two gold mines could each require about 75 megawatts.

The storage proposal forms part of a wider effort to strengthen Guyana's energy security. Government is also reviewing several refinery proposals, including one presented by a UAE delegation and one or two others, while Bechtel is conducting studies on the proposed deep-water port.

Guyana currently produces crude offshore but imports refined petroleum products. Government has previously said expanded storage, together with a domestic refinery, could reduce exposure to international supply and price shocks and eventually support regional fuel exports.

GUYANESE ROLE IN OIL SECTOR DEEPENS WITH 65 VESSELS, GROWING LOCAL SERVICES



Guyanese gaining meaningful employment on and offshore

Guyana's oil industry is creating a growing local ecosystem around offshore production, with Guyanese increasingly employed, not only at sea, but across the network of businesses and specialised services that keep offshore operations running.

Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation, Deodat Indar said approximately 65 transport vessels, including tugs, platform supply vessels and fast vessels, are currently operating offshore, with Guyanese working aboard many of them.

Guyanese are also employed on drill ships, Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessels and construction vessels supporting subsea operations, Indar said.

But the local footprint extends well beyond the water. According to the minister, Guyanese companies and workers are now involved in logistics, transportation, warehousing, engineering, welding, lifting, rigging, crane operations and other specialised services supporting offshore activity.

"Every single thing that is needed offshore is provided on an onshore basis and it comes through Guyana," Minister Indar said.

The shift is also reaching into fabrication, with components such as risers and jumpers now being manufactured locally and transported directly to offshore operations.

"It's transported from Guyana, made in Guyana, sent right offshore," he said.

The expanding network illustrates how the oil industry is generating activity beyond production itself, with more of the services, skills and materials required offshore being supplied from within Guyana.



Guyanese gaining meaningful employment on and offshore

ELECTRIC VEHICLE GROWTH FORCES GUYANA TO BUILD TECHNICAL WORKFORCE



GEA trains 102 technicians as Guyana builds workforce for electric mobility

Guyana is moving to build the technical workforce behind its growing electric vehicle (EV) market, with the latest cohort of trained technicians bringing the number of persons equipped to maintain and repair EVs to 102.

The Guyana Energy Agency (GEA) graduated 25 technicians from its fifth EV Maintenance and Repairs programme at the Mahaicony Technical and Vocational Training Centre, as the number of EVs on Guyana's roads continues to climb.

More than 900 EVs have now been imported into the country, according to Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, Dr Alfred King.

The growth is also reflected in charging demand. King said charging sessions increased from 231 between January and August 2025 to 835 during the same period in 2026, an increase of more than 261 per cent.

That expansion is creating a parallel demand for people who can safely service the technology.

"The investment in charging infrastructure must therefore be matched by investment in people," King said, pointing to the need for technicians trained to diagnose faults, handle high-voltage systems and carry out specialised repairs.

The latest graduates underwent Institute of the Motor Industry Level 4 EV/Hybrid training, including practical work on high-voltage battery systems.

King said Guyana must now deepen that capacity by developing a training-of-trainers programme, allowing local professionals to eventually train others and reducing reliance on overseas expertise.

The growing market is also opening space for entrepreneurship, with the new technicians positioned to provide specialised maintenance and repair services as EV ownership expands.

The latest training builds on earlier GEA programmes, including the fourth cohort of 27 technicians graduated in 2025.

The push comes alongside expansion of the country's public charging network, which is expected to reach 24 publicly accessible charging stations by the end of 2026.



GEA trains 102 technicians as Guyana builds workforce for electric mobility

10,000-HOME DEAL PUTS US CAPITAL BEHIND GUYANA'S HOUSING PUSH



Guyana's housing programme is attracting a major new wave of foreign capital, with two United States (US) companies set to collaborate on the construction of 10,000 affordable homes, backed by financing from the US Export-Import Bank (EXIM).

US Frame Factory of Louisiana and Golden Shield Homes of Indiana are expected to enter the Guyanese market through the initiative, adding a significant international dimension to the Government's affordable housing drive.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Mohabir Anil Nandlall, S.C., described the planned investment as evidence of growing confidence among international companies and financial institutions in Guyana's economic prospects.

"These are signals from huge financial giants that they have confidence in Guyana. They have confidence in the government, and they have confidence in investing in Guyana," Minister Nandlall said on his Facebook programme, *Issues in the News*.

He pointed to the expanding involvement of export-credit institutions, noting that financing is now being made available for projects spanning energy, highways, deep-water ports, airports, river dredging, security and housing.

Minister Nandlall said the change is significant compared with two decades ago, when major export-financing institutions were largely unwilling to finance projects in Guyana.

He identified the United Kingdom Export Finance, India Exim, China Exim, US Exim and African Export-Import Bank among institutions expressing interest in Guyana.

The planned US-backed housing investment adds another sector to that expanding financing pipeline, while potentially increasing the supply of affordable homes as Guyana's housing programme continues to expand.

MORE THAN 200 FAMILIES EDGE CLOSER TO OWNING THEIR HOMES



Construction of 100 low-income homes progressing at Le Reconnaissance

More than 200 families are moving closer to homeownership as major housing projects in Regions Four and Six advance, reflecting the Government's push to deliver completed homes alongside house lots.

At Le Reconnaissance on the East Coast of Demerara, construction is progressing on 100 low-income homes already allocated to pre-qualified beneficiaries. The two-bedroom houses, valued at approximately $5.5 million each, are expected to be substantially completed by January 2027, with some units likely to be handed over before Christmas.

The project is generating employment for more than 120 workers through eight local contractors.

Minister of Housing and Water Collin Croal said the development demonstrates the Government's commitment to expanding housing options and addressing growing demand.

"The demand for houses is high," he stated, noting that the administration has set a target of delivering 40,000 housing solutions over the next five years.

The Le Reconnaissance initiative forms part of a wider 175-home programme and is expected to be complemented by prefab and modular housing projects aimed at accelerating construction and increasing supply.

The need for additional housing remains significant. Region Four currently accounts for more than 50,000 pending housing applications, making ongoing development and land acquisition critical to reducing the backlog.

At the same time, construction of 110 young professional homes at Palmyra, Region Six, has reached approximately 60 per cent completion. Minister Croal said the first set of houses is expected to be completed this month, while all units are on track for completion before the end of the year.

The more than $2.1 billion investment includes modern three-bedroom homes valued at approximately $19.5 million each.

Together, the projects highlight the continued expansion of the national housing programme, transforming approved applications into completed homes and bringing hundreds of families closer to receiving the keys to their own property.

14 NEW WELLS TO STRENGTHEN WATER SUPPLY IN GROWING COMMUNITIES



One of the many water wells that were drilled accross the country

Growing communities across four regions are set to benefit from stronger water infrastructure as the Government advances plans to drill 14 new wells to keep pace with expanding housing developments and population growth.

The initiative, being implemented through the Ministry of Housing and Central Housing and Planning Authority, will see six wells drilled in Region Four, four in Region Six, three in Region Three and one in Region Ten.

The new wells are expected to strengthen water supply in both established and emerging housing communities, ensuring residential development is supported by the infrastructure needed to provide reliable access to potable water.

The programme forms part of wider efforts by Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI) to expand access while making treated water more affordable for residents.

GWI's Chief Executive Officer, Shaik Baksh said the initiatives follow a mandate from President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali to improve water services across the country.

"This is an initiative to serve the people of Guyana and to make water affordable to the people," he said.

Alongside the well-drilling programme, GWI is establishing water refilling stations across the regions, with two to three planned in each region. Stations are already operating at locations including Lima, Port Mourant, Pouderoyen and Vergenoegen, with expansion planned for Bartica and Linden.

Residents can refill a five-gallon container for $100, providing a lower-cost option for accessing treated water.

Together, the programmes are strengthening the water network behind Guyana's expanding communities while putting affordable potable water within easier reach of residents.

NEW COMMUNITIES GET ROOM TO PLAY, MOVE AND CONNECT



27 recreational facilities being developed nationwide to complement housing programme

New housing communities are being planned with more than houses in mind, as the government develops 27 recreational facilities nationwide to give residents spaces to exercise, play and spend time together.

Twelve of the facilities are being developed in Region Four, including one at Le Reconnaissance on the East Coast of Demerara, where construction is already underway.

The facility is being delivered in phases, beginning with fencing, concrete drainage and ground-levelling works to complete the playing field. A second phase will add an exercise walkway, children's slides and other amenities.

Housing Minister, Collin Croal said the facilities form part of a broader effort to ensure new communities develop into places where families can live, not simply housing schemes where houses are built.

"An avenue for persons to bring their children for leisure is one such activity to develop communities," he said.

With the government's housing programme expanding into new areas, the investment in recreational infrastructure signals a shift toward building the social infrastructure that makes communities functional, active and family-oriented.

GUYANA MOVES TOWARD SPECIALISED STEM SCHOOL WITH EXXON

Guyana is moving toward establishing a specialised Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) school with ExxonMobil, as the country looks to build the highly skilled workforce needed for its expanding economy.

President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali disclosed the initiative during a recent interview with journalist Fareeza Haniff, identifying specialised STEM education as part of the next phase of national development.

"Soon we'll be thoroughly sought for the building of a STEM, specialised STEM school with Exxon. Only a few of those in the world," President Ali said.

The proposed school would add another layer to a broader ExxonMobil-backed STEM investment already underway in Guyana. In February, ExxonMobil announced a US$100 million, 10-year commitment focused on teacher training, student opportunities and career pathways, including a network of STEM centres.

The government is now looking beyond basic access to education to develop specialised capabilities in areas that can support Guyana's emerging industries, including energy, technology, advanced agriculture, climate services and other technical fields.

President Ali said the next four years should be focused on transformative investments capable of creating long-term opportunities, with human-resource development alongside physical infrastructure.

The proposed specialised school therefore forms part of a wider push to ensure economic expansion is matched by a stronger domestic pool of scientists, engineers, technologists and other highly trained professionals.

The emphasis comes as Guyana continues to expand STEM opportunities through teacher training and specialised programmes.



The Exxon funded STELLAR programme began training an initial cohort of 60 pre-service secondary school mathematics and science teachers starting in August 2026.

Sixty pre-service secondary teachers began a two-year STEM training programme in August under ExxonMobil's STELLAR initiative.

For the President, developing that talent pipeline is central to sustaining Guyana's next stage of growth, with young Guyanese being encouraged to develop ideas, pursue specialised knowledge and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

FIRST REGION ONE SEND SCHOOL OPENS

For families in Mabaruma raising children with special education needs and disabilities, specialised support is now available closer to home with the opening of Region One's first Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school.

The Mabaruma SEND School, opened by the Ministry of Education, is Guyana's 57th SEND space. It can accommodate 30 learners and has four specially trained teachers, with 15 children already enrolled.

The new facility means families no longer have to look outside the region for specialised educational support, reducing the cost and strain associated with travelling for services.

The expansion will continue, with SEND facilities planned for Region One's Moruca and Matarkai sub-districts. Bids have already been invited for new facilities at Moruca and Port Kaituma, each estimated at $37.4 million.

Nationally, SEND provision has expanded from just 13 recognised spaces in 2020 to 57 today. More than 300 people have also completed SEND training through GOAL, while the University of Guyana introduced specialised courses in 2025.

The expansion is bringing specialised education closer to the children and families who need it most.



Region One gets first SEND school

$85,000 EDUCATION GRANT REACHES GUYANA'S CAPE STUDENTS



Distribution of the grant for CAPE students

Support for Guyanese students is extending through the final stage of secondary education, with CAPE students now receiving the Government's $85,000 Because We Care education grant.

The latest phase of the programme has seen students collect their payments at distribution sites including Diamond Secondary School and Queen's College, where Education Minister Sonia Parag met with beneficiaries.

The CAPE rollout follows the completion of distributions to students at other levels in public and private schools across the country, extending direct financial assistance across the school system.

For families, the grant provides additional support at a stage when students face the demands of advanced-level studies and prepare for tertiary education or entry into the workforce.

The continued rollout is part of the Government's broader education support programme, which combines direct assistance to families with investment in the education system.

By extending the $85,000 payment to CAPE students, the programme is ensuring that financial support does not stop before students reach the final stretch of secondary school.

21 ENTREPRENEURS GAIN TOOLS TO BUILD STRONGER BUSINESSES

Twenty-one small business owners are strengthening their ability to compete and grow after completing a practical business development programme designed to move entrepreneurs beyond simply running a business to managing it for long-term success.

The entrepreneurs received Small Business Operations Certificates following training delivered by the Small Business Bureau (SBB) in business management, marketing, financial management, record-keeping, business proposal writing and business planning.

For entrepreneur Devon Douglas, who has operated a general procurement and event management business since 2023, the training exposed gaps in areas he had previously relied on experience to navigate.

"**When you go to the training, and you have experts who have been doing this for years, then you realise that there are gaps within your thinking**," he said.

With a background in information technology, Douglas said the programme helped him strengthen his company profile, refine his marketing strategy and improve his understanding of financial management.

For baker Kasme Seemangal, the training marked her first formal business course. What began as baking for birthdays, receptions and small events has grown into supplying products to supermarkets.

She said the programme gave her practical tools to better manage her finances, marketing and day-to-day operations.

"It opened up a whole new world to me," she said, adding that the knowledge will help her reach new customers and access new markets.

Seemangal is also pursuing additional training in areas such as packaging and labelling as she works to expand her products.

SBB's Chief Executive Officer, Mohamed Shazim Ibrahim urged the graduates to put their new skills into practice and use them to strengthen their enterprises.



SBB's Chief Executive Officer Mohamed Shazim Ibrahim with certified entrepreneursSBB's Chief Executive Officer Mohamed Shazim Ibrahim with certified entrepreneurs

The programme forms part of broader efforts to equip small and emerging businesses with the knowledge needed to improve operations, pursue new markets and build sustainable enterprises.

$85M INVESTMENT MOVES TECHNICAL EDUCATION FROM DRAFTING BOARDS TO DIGITAL DESIGN

Guyana's technical education system is moving beyond the drafting board, with six secondary schools now equipped to train students in digital design tools increasingly used across architecture, engineering, construction and manufacturing sectors.

The shift is being driven by an $85 million investment by the Ministry of Education to establish specialised Industrial Technology computer laboratories, replacing traditional manual technical drawing with computer-aided design (CAD) and 3D modelling.

With the commissioning of laboratories at North Ruimveldt Secondary School, Hope Secondary School and Zeeburg Secondary School, the full six-school rollout has been completed. They join Abram Zuil Secondary School, Bygeval Secondary School and New Amsterdam Multilateral School under the initiative.

Each laboratory is equipped with air-conditioned workspaces, high-powered laptops, peripheral hardware and AutoCAD software, giving students access to tools comparable to those used in professional environments.



New Amsterdam Secondary

The significance extends beyond the classroom. Students preparing for Caribbean Examinations Council Industrial Technology subjects, including Building and Mechanical Engineering Drawing, can now produce digital drawings, structural blueprints and three-dimensional models on computer workstations rather than relying solely on drafting boards.

Deputy Chief Education Officer for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Dr Ritesh Tularam, said the upgrade reflects a wider transformation in what technical education must deliver.

"**Technical education is no longer simply about learning how to operate tools and equipment,"** he said, pointing to the growing importance of digital competencies, creativity and problem-solving.

The investment comes as Guyana's infrastructure, housing, energy and manufacturing sectors continue to expand, increasing demand for workers who can combine practical knowledge with digital skills.

Education Minister, Sonia Parag said students are being prepared not merely to enter existing professions, but to contribute to the country's future development.

"**You are using technology to create 3D designs that allow you to become the architects and engineers who will build our country,"** she told students at North Ruimveldt.

She also urged more girls to pursue engineering and design, while the Ministry continues its broader push for every secondary-school student to leave the education system proficient in at least one technical or vocational skill.

30 GUYANESE BEGIN ADVANCED OIL AND GAS STUDIES



Some of those gathered at the induction ceremony

As Guyana's oil industry pushes toward the one-million-barrel-per-day milestone, another group of young Guyanese is being prepared to take their place in one of the country's fastest-growing sectors.

Thirty students have begun an Advanced Diploma in Oil and Gas programme at the Guyana Technical Training College Inc., (GTTCI) in Port Mourant, Berbice, adding to the country's efforts to ensure that more Guyanese are equipped to benefit from the opportunities being created by the energy sector.

Speaking at the induction ceremony, Minister of Labour and Manpower Planning, Keoma Griffith noted that Guyana's economy is projected to grow by 20.8 per cent in 2026, while the non-oil economy is expected to expand by 10.2 per cent.

He said the country produced an average of 902,000 barrels of oil per day during the first half of the year and is expected to surpass one million barrels daily when a fifth production vessel comes on stream later this year.

Against that backdrop, Griffith stressed that developing local talent is essential if Guyanese are to fully participate in the country's economic transformation.

"Machines can be imported, steel can be shipped, and capital can be borrowed, but the skilled hands and trained minds that design, build, operate, maintain, and protect a modern economy must be developed," he said.

The minister also pointed to Berbice's growing importance in the country's industrial future, predicting that the region will become a major centre of economic activity in the years ahead.



30 young people embark on GTTCI's oil and gas training

The programme reflects a broader shift taking place across the country, one focused not only on extracting resources, but on building the skilled workforce needed to sustain long-term growth and create opportunities for future generations.

WEEKEND WELDERS PROGRAMME OPENS NEW PATH TO CERTIFIED TRADES



Some of those gathered at the induction ceremony

Sixty Grade 10 students at Freeburg Secondary School are getting an early start on careers in Guyana's expanding industrial sector through a six-month welding programme designed to give them internationally recognised technical skills.

The "Weekend Welders" programme, launched under the theme "Building the foundation for the future", provides 208 hours of training over 26 weeks at the Guyana Industrial Training Centre (GITC) on Woolford Avenue.

Conceptualised by Deputy Chief Education Officer for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Dr Ritesh Tularam, the programme introduces students to welding, engineering fundamentals and workplace safety while preparing them for future employment, apprenticeships, technical education or entrepreneurship.

Training combines classroom instruction with intensive hands-on practice, covering areas ranging from safety, technical drawing and precision measurement to power tools, mechanical cutting, engineering calculations and Manual Metal Arc and Oxyacetylene Welding.

The programme is aligned with the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Level I in Welding. Students who successfully demonstrate competence and pass the required assessments will earn regional certification.

Education officials say the initiative responds to growing demand for certified tradespeople as construction, oil and gas, mining, manufacturing and infrastructure continue to expand.

Importantly, the programme allows students to gain these skills without sacrificing their regular academic timetable.

Dr Tularam said the initiative is expected to expand to more secondary schools in 2027 and introduce additional technical disciplines.

The programme forms part of a wider push to ensure every secondary school student leaves school equipped with at least one practical skill.

KAMARANG HOSPITAL MOVES FROM EMPTY OXYGEN BOTTLES TO SURGERY

A hospital in the heart of the Upper Mazaruni has moved from struggling with basic supplies to performing surgery, marking a significant expansion of healthcare available to remote communities in Region Seven.

The Upper Mazaruni District Hospital in Kamarang Village now has a functioning operating theatre, 13 new beds and laboratory equipment comparable to that at Bartica Regional Hospital.

Regional Health Officer, Dr Mark Allen said the transformation has been stark since he first arrived in the region six years ago.

"When I first came here, I went to Kamarang Hospital. It basically had a single empty oxygen bottle. We had rapid tests, we had a few broken beds, and we had nothing much to work with," he said during a regional briefing.

The facility now has at least four full oxygen bottles, a new incubator and an upgraded delivery room, while two surgical outreaches have already been conducted. The first surgeries were performed in April 2024, with plans to expand the programme.



The surgical theatre at the Upper Mazaruni District Hospital in Kamarang

The region is also preparing to introduce eye surgeries. A new doctor has joined the health team and equipment is being procured, with ophthalmic procedures expected to begin at Bartica Regional Hospital before being extended to Kamarang.

Beyond infrastructure, changes in the supply of medicines are also reaching remote communities.

Through CORTEX, health facilities can now submit medication requests directly to the Ministry of Health's Materials Management Unit, reducing delays that previously affected communities such as Waramadong, Waipa and Arau.

Dr Allen said medication availability in the Upper Mazaruni has increased from the low 50 per cent range to the high 90s. Supplies are also being pre-positioned in riverine communities before the dry season, when low water levels can make transportation more difficult.

The region is preparing for electronic medical records, which are expected to integrate with CORTEX and allow doctors to access patients' treatment histories across facilities.

At Bartica Regional Hospital, specialist services already include surgery, orthopaedics, gynaecology, paediatrics, ophthalmology and dentistry, with dental services available across all three districts.

GOAL DELIVERS FIRST ONLINE HEALTHCARE GRADUATES



115 healthcare professionals graduate from first GOAL × Medvarsity health sciences cohort

As Guyana expands hospitals, diagnostic services and specialised care, efforts are also intensifying to build the skilled workforce needed to support the country's healthcare transformation.

That effort received another boost with the graduation of 115 healthcare professionals from the inaugural Medvarsity Health Science Certificate Programme, the first online healthcare science initiative offered through the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL).

The graduates received certification in specialised areas including ECG interpretation, diabetic nutrition, critical care nursing, clinical oncology and essentials of cardiology, strengthening expertise in fields that are increasingly important as Guyana confronts rising rates of non-communicable diseases.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, Minister of Health, Dr Frank Anthony underscored the importance of continuous professional development in delivering high-quality healthcare services.

"You can't have a world-class health system if you don't have world-class professionals," he stated.

Dr Anthony said training opportunities are critical as Guyana modernises and expands its health sector, ensuring healthcare workers are equipped with the skills needed to meet evolving patient demands.



115 healthcare professionals graduate from first GOAL × Medvarsity health sciences cohort (1)

GOAL's Director, Professor Dr Jacob Opadeyi described the programme as an important investment in the country's healthcare workforce. He noted that the training combined online instruction with clinical observation, allowing participants to strengthen both their knowledge and practical competencies.

For the graduates, the achievement represents more than a new qualification. It adds to the growing cadre of trained professionals supporting Guyana's drive to deliver more specialised, accessible and modern healthcare services across the country.

LOWER MAZARUNI SEES FAST FOLLOW-THROUGH AFTER PRESIDENTIAL OUTREACH



Regional Executive Officer (REO) Dr Josh Kanhai accompanied President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali during the outreach to Region Seven in May

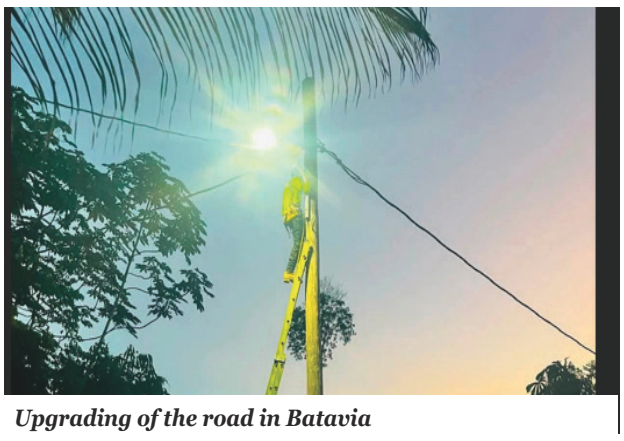
Residents of Lower Mazaruni are seeing road works, new equipment, restored hospital power and expanded lighting within weeks of raising those concerns during President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's Region Seven outreach.

Regional Executive Officer, Dr Josh Kanhai said the region moved quickly to act on issues raised at community meetings in Bartica, Batavia and Karrau, with several interventions already underway.

In Batavia, about two kilometres of road have been upgraded to an all-weather crusher-run surface, improving access for residents.

The region also received an excavator, grader and roller three to four weeks after the President identified the need for additional machinery in Bartica. The equipment is now being used to upgrade dams and grade roads in Dark Point, Karrau and Agatash.

At Bartica Regional Hospital, power problems raised during the outreach have been addressed by Ministry of Health electrical and biomedical teams. A repaired X-ray machine is expected to return to service shortly, with backup units available in the interim.



Upgrading of the road in Batavia

Lighting is also expanding across Lower Mazaruni. Some 350 streetlights have already been received, while an assessment has been completed for new transmission lines in Karrau. Kanhai said almost 98 per cent of Lower Mazaruni districts are expected to have community lighting by year-end.

Sea-defence works at Batavia are being advanced by the Sea Defence Board and Ministry of Public Works, while projects in central Bartica are expected to proceed to tender.

The Ministry of Education has meanwhile committed more than $200 million to repairs to school gutters, trestles, water systems, security and lighting ahead of the new school term.

Together, the interventions show a shift from concerns raised at community meetings to works being executed across the Lower Mazaruni.

WEEKLY FARMERS' MARKET TAKES AIM AT FOOD MARK-UPS



Farmers Market to be held weekly in Sophia, monthly across regions

A new weekly Farmers' Market at Sophia is putting farmers directly in front of consumers, cutting out a layer of intermediaries the Agriculture Ministry said can drive up the price of food.

The market, launched at the Sophia Exhibition Complex, will operate every Wednesday from 3:30 p.m., with similar markets planned at least once a month across the regions.

Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustapha said direct connection is intended to give farmers a better return while allowing consumers to buy fresh, locally produced food at lower prices.

"We want to set up this market to cushion and help consumers to get a cheaper price for items," MinisterMustapha said.

He pointed to the mark-ups that can accumulate as produce moves from farmers through intermediaries before reaching consumers, arguing that removing some of those layers can benefit both ends of the food chain.

The first market brought together farmers and vendors offering fresh produce and other locally made products, giving shoppers an alternative to conventional retail channels.

For farmer Christopher Bhukhan, selling directly means producers can offer reasonable prices while giving consumers a clearer picture of what it costs to produce food.

The opportunity is also significant for newer producers. Farmer Nirmala Sukhu, who recently received training through the Small Business Bureau, said the market provides an avenue for emerging producers to showcase and sell their products.

Consumer reaction reflected the immediate attraction of the model. Olivia Ward, who discovered the market through social media, said the lower prices were particularly welcome amid high food costs.



Farmers Market to be held weekly in Sophia, monthly across regions

"It feels very good because the prices in the market is very high right now," she said.

First-time shopper Teanisha Alleyne also welcomed the decision to make the market weekly, saying the prices were favourable compared with what she normally pays.

The expansion builds on the Agriculture Ministry's longer-running effort to create direct market opportunities for farmers while improving consumers' access to fresh produce at competitive prices. Similar farmers' markets have previously been held across the country.

GUYANA AT FOREFRONT OF CARIBBEAN FOOD DRIVE WITH 792,000 TONNES OUTPUT



Guyana highlights regional food production progress at COTED

Guyana is emerging as a major force in the Caribbean's drive to strengthen food security, recording the largest agricultural output among reporting CARICOM Member States during the first half of 2026 while expanding its contribution to regional food trade.

Guyana produced 792,012 tonnes of agricultural commodities between January and June, representing 42 per cent of its full-year 2026 production target, according to the latest report of the Special Ministerial Task Force on Food Production and Food Security.

The report was presented by Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture, Vickash Ramkissoon at the 127th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), on behalf of Task Force Chairman and Guyana's Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha.

Across the reporting Member States, approximately 1.4 million tonnes of agricultural output were recorded during the period, about 42.3 per cent of their combined annual targets.

Guyana's growing role is also reflected in trade. Its agricultural exports increased from US$375.4 million in 2023 to US$402.3 million in 2024, while exports to fellow CARICOM markets rose from US$89.8 million to US$120.1 million.

The regional figures point to progress, but also expose the scale of the challenge. CARICOM is seeking to reduce extra-regional food imports by 25 per cent, while producers continue to contend with climate shocks, shipping and supply-chain disruptions, rising input and transportation costs, and shortages of labour and technical skills.

As Chairman of the regional task force, Minister Mustapha has kept increased production, stronger intra-regional trade and reduced dependence on imported food at the centre of the CARICOM agenda.

Regional initiatives now being advanced include an electronic agricultural market information system, a strategy for planting material and genetic resources, and a proposed US$1.2 million partnership with South Korea targeting climate resilience, ocean governance and fisheries modernisation.

The latest COTED report reinforces Guyana's growing role not only as a producer, but as a key contributor to the Caribbean's broader push for greater food independence.

NAREI GETS $60M VEHICLE BOOST TO HELP TAKE AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT DEEPER INTO FARMING COMMUNITIES

The government has invested $60 million in a new fleet of vehicles for the National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (NAREI), strengthening the institute's ability to deliver technical support to farmers and drive higher agricultural production.

Minister of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha handed over 12 motorcycles, six all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and five pickups, describing the investment as part of a broader push to improve food security and expand agricultural output nationwide.



NAREI receives $60M vehicle fleet to boost agricultural efforts

The vehicles will enable NAREI officers to reach more farming communities, provide field support and respond more effectively to challenges affecting production.

"We are ensuring that NAREI can be equipped to provide the necessary guidance to us because food security is important," Minister Mustapha said.

He noted that the initiative forms part of the government's wider strategy to position Guyana as a leading food producer in the Caribbean.

"We want Guyana to be the premier food producer in CARICOM. We are moving there very aggressively, but we have to have the facilities," he stated.



NAREI receives $60M vehicle fleet to boost agricultural efforts

The minister urged staff to make full and responsible use of the vehicles, warning that poor management could undermine the institute's work.

800 CAMERAS CHANGE CRIME FIGHTING IN GUYANA



Minister of Home Affairs Oneidge Walrond on Starting Point

The way Guyana investigates crime is changing, with a growing surveillance network and facial recognition technology giving police new tools to identify suspects, establish what happened and strengthen cases.

Approximately 800 CCTV cameras have been installed under the Safe Country initiative over the past five years, with coverage extending across most regions.

Home Affairs Minister, Oneidge Walrond said the system is already producing results, with footage helping investigators establish events and identify people connected to incidents.

As a former magistrate, Minister Walrond said cases once depended heavily on eyewitness testimony, which could contribute to lengthy trials. Video footage can provide a contemporaneous record of an incident, strengthening evidence and reducing reliance on conflicting accounts.

She pointed to footage of an attack on a young woman, allegedly involving a Ministry of Home Affairs employee, as one example of how surveillance can assist investigations.

The technology is also being used proactively. Facial recognition is helping police track persons of interest and identify locations where they may be staying, while officers are receiving additional training in intelligence-led policing.

The shift is from simply responding to offences after they occur to using technology and intelligence to identify patterns, locate suspects and build cases.

"We have more cameras being deployed, more training for police officers in terms of intelligence-led crime fighting," Minister Walrond said.

For investigators, the expanding network provides another source of evidence. For the public, it means greater surveillance of monitored spaces, and a growing digital trail for offences committed in them.

ROAD ACCIDENTS FALL 19%, BUT DANGEROUS DRIVING REMAINS A KILLER

Guyana is recording fewer road accidents, but the decline has not erased the dangerous behaviours continuing to claim lives, with speeding still the leading cause of fatal crashes.

Traffic Chief, Assistant Commissioner of Police Mahendra Singh, said accidents across all categories have fallen by 19 per cent, while fatalities have also eased.

The country has recorded 83 fatal accidents and 89 deaths so far this year, compared with 84 fatal accidents and 93 deaths during the same period last year. Child deaths have fallen from five to two.

Singh attributed the improvement to sustained enforcement, public awareness and increased use of traffic technology, but warned that dangerous driving remains a serious problem.

Speeding accounts for 65 fatal crashes this year, down from 70 last year. Meanwhile, fatal crashes linked to inattentiveness increased from nine to 14, while those involving pedestrians crossing into the path of vehicles rose from four to five.

Two fatal crashes involved drunk driving, with those cases completed for motor manslaughter charges.

The East Bank Demerara has recorded the most fatal accidents at 19, followed by Central Georgetown and the East Coast Demerara with 14 each.

Technology is becoming a central part of enforcement. The Safe Road Intelligence System, fully operational since April 2025, has issued more than 70,000 electronic tickets, with over 38,000 paid.

The system currently covers 112 lanes in Regions Three and Four, with another 48 lanes in Regions Four and Ten expected to come online before year-end.

Twenty-seven drivers have also had their licences suspended for dangerous driving and speeding under the demerit points system, with suspensions ranging from six to 12 months.



Traffic Chief, Mahindra Singh on the Starting Point podcast

The falling accident figures point to progress, but the continued toll from speeding and other risky behaviour shows that road safety remains a work in progress.

TRUCK SPEED LIMITERS SET TO ENTER ROAD-SAFETY ENFORCEMENT



Heavy duty Tracks

Approximately 8,000 speed limiters have been procured and delivered to the Guyana Police Force as the country moves to physically restrict the speed of heavy-duty trucks.

The devices are to be installed on goods transportation vehicles, with training now being conducted for personnel responsible for installation and certification.

Traffic Chief Singh, said installation training is expected to begin shortly, after which certified personnel will install the devices.

Unlike conventional enforcement, speed limiters are designed to prevent a vehicle from exceeding its prescribed speed. Singh explained that a limiter set at 80 kilometres per hour would prevent a laden truck from travelling faster than that speed.

The devices will also be subject to certification and maintenance requirements. Singh said a speed compliance certificate will have to confirm that each limiter has been properly installed and is functioning before a vehicle receives its certificate of fitness. Penalties will also apply for tampering.

The initiative moves road-safety enforcement beyond detecting speeding after it happens to physically limiting the speed at which certain vehicles can travel.

Singh has also backed eventually extending speed-control technology to public transportation, arguing that buses and other public service vehicles must be part of the road-safety system.

With new highways expanding the road network, the government is increasingly combining enforcement, surveillance and vehicle technology to tackle speeding before it becomes a crash.

TRAINING FAIR STRENGTHENS SKILLS BEHIND PRISON REHABILITATION



GPS hosts training fair to strengthen staff development

The Guyana Prison Service (GPS) is putting officer development at the centre of its rehabilitation efforts through a three-day training fair designed to strengthen skills, encourage professional growth and deepen understanding of prison operations.

Held at Prison Headquarters as part of the GPS's 43rd-anniversary celebrations under the theme "Engage, Learn and Grow", the first-of-its-kind fair used interactive booths to expose officers to different areas of the service.

GPS Chief Officer, Trudy DeCunha said the initiative is intended to renew staff interest in personal and professional development while allowing officers to build on existing skills and learn new ones.

The fair featured displays on prison management, information technology, reception, languages and the Strategic Department, giving officers greater insight into the responsibilities of different sections.

DeCunha stressed that a well-trained workforce is critical to effective inmate rehabilitation.

"**We understand the importance of rehabilitation, and we can only rehabilitate the inmates effectively when the officers are trained to do so,**" she said.

SERVICE AND CONDUCT TO MATTER MORE IN POLICE PROMOTIONS



Members of the Guyana Police Force

Years in uniform alone will no longer be enough to secure promotion in the Guyana Police Force (GPF), with the Government moving to place greater weight on merit, leadership, performance and conduct as it seeks to strengthen professionalism within the ranks.

Minister of Home Affairs, Oneidge Walrond said officers being considered for advancement must be assessed on how they have performed, how they lead and whether their service record reflects the integrity expected of a police officer.

"Every police officer should conduct their job with integrity and professionalism," Minister Walrond said on the *Starting Point* podcast.

She said disciplinary infractions must be properly documented and considered during promotion decisions, making clear that longevity in the force should not automatically translate into career advancement.

"It should come on the basis of merit," she stressed.

The approach comes as the GPF expands opportunities for professionals including lawyers, engineers, doctors, psychologists and mechanics. However, Minister Walrond said specialised qualifications should strengthen an officer's prospects, not guarantee promotion.

The Government is simultaneously seeking to make policing a more attractive and sustainable career by investing in officers' welfare. The force now has almost 8,000 ranks, while educational standards for recruitment remain in place.

Officers are also being encouraged to pursue further education, potentially opening pathways to higher salaries and advancement.

Beyond pay, the Government is promoting financial security through access to credit union loans, favourable mortgage rates and guidance on savings, bonds and property investment. Accommodation and transportation are also provided for ranks serving away from their home communities.

Minister Walrond said these measures are intended to help officers build more secure lives for themselves and their families while confronting the demands of policing.

"Welfare is never... and should not be an afterthought," she said.

The policy represents a broader push to make advancement in the GPF reflect not simply time served, but the quality of service delivered to the public.

MINISTER WALROND PUTS GPF OPERATIONS UNDER CLOSER SCRUTINY



Minister of Home Affairs, Oneidge Walrond made unannounced visits to three units of the Guyana Police Force

Key units of the Guyana Police Force (GPF) are coming under closer scrutiny as Home Affairs Minister, Oneidge Walrond takes a firsthand look at how they operate, manage administrative processes and deliver services to the public.

Minister Walrond conducted unannounced visits to the GPF Academy, Criminal Record Office and Police Credit Union, observing ranks and administrative staff as they carried out their daily duties.

Rather than relying solely on scheduled briefings, the minister used the visits to examine existing workflows and see how the respective units function in their normal working environment. She also engaged personnel directly on their responsibilities, operational challenges and areas where changes could improve efficiency and service delivery.

The exercise places particular attention on the systems behind public-facing policing,from the training of ranks to the processing of criminal records and the administration of services provided through the Police Credit Union.

Walrond was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner (Operations) Errol Watts, Director of the GPF Academy Senior Superintendent Sonia Herbert, Commandant of the GPF Academy, Georgetown, Superintendent Halley Smith, and other officials.

The ministry said the visits form part of its ongoing efforts to maintain direct engagement with police ranks and assess the functioning of key GPF departments, with emphasis on efficiency, accountability and improved service to citizens.

The approach also gives the ministry a direct view of operational challenges at the level where police personnel and administrative staff interact with the public and carry out essential functions each day.

4,200-FOOT RUNWAY STRENGTHENS MATTHEWS RIDGE'S CONNECTION TO GUYANA



Heavy duty Tracks

For residents of Matthews Ridge, getting in and out of the remote Region One community is becoming easier, and in an emergency, potentially much faster.

The completed upgrade of the Matthews Ridge Airstrip has delivered a 4,200-foot reinforced concrete runway capable of accommodating larger aircraft, including Beechcraft-type planes, while new taxiways, a parking apron, international-standard markings and visual aid lighting will support night-time operations.

The improvements are expected to strengthen access to emergency and medevac services, while making the movement of people and goods more efficient.

But the investment also looks beyond transportation. With improved air access, Matthews Ridge is better positioned to attract economic activity, support local businesses and facilitate greater movement into the community.

The project was delivered by the Ministry of Public Works' Special Projects Unit under the Community Participation Model, providing direct employment for 60 Matthews Ridge residents and 15 skilled workers from Mabaruma.

The upgraded facility gives the community a stronger connection to the wider country while creating infrastructure capable of supporting its emergency, social and economic needs.

NEW FACILITIES SET TO TRANSFORM ANNANDALE COMMUNITY GROUND



The Marshon playground at Annandale

What was once a difficult, water-prone piece of land in Annandale is being transformed into a safer and more functional space for recreation, sport and community life.

The Annandale-Marshon Community Ground on the East Coast of Demerara is nearing completion, with fencing, lighting and landfilling already finished and a pavilion, turnstiles, children's play equipment and exercise facilities now being added.

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Charles Ramson Jr. described the project as one of the most challenging among the more than 400 community grounds upgraded by the Government, largely because the site is several feet below the surrounding road and seawall.

Despite the difficulties, the investment is moving ahead, with completion expected within about two months.

The project forms part of a wider push that has seen more than 650 community grounds receive investment, including lighting at over 150 facilities nationwide.

For Annandale residents, however, the significance is local: a space that was difficult to use is being turned into a place where children can play, residents can exercise and communities can gather.

Residents are also being consulted on how the facility should be developed and used, putting community needs at the centre of the investment.

Farmers' Conference discussions to shape future of agriculture – Mustapha

MINISTER of Agriculture, Zulfikar Mustapha, has called for greater collaboration between farmers and the government in shaping the future of Guyana's agricultural sector.

This call was made on Monday at the Farmers' Conference 2026, which brought together producers, agricultural stakeholders, and regional leaders to discuss the sector's development and their role in strengthening food security.

Hosted under the theme "Innovate, Nourish, Grow: Building a Strong and Sustainable Guyana," the conference formed part of Agriculture Month 2026 and provided a platform for farmers to share their experiences, identify challenges and contribute recommendations towards a national action plan for agriculture.

Minister Mustapha said the conference was established following concerns raised by farmers about the absence of a national forum where they could meet, exchange ideas and have a direct voice in decisions affecting their livelihoods.

Delivering the opening address, Mustapha was keen to emphasise that farmers remain at the centre for Guyana's development.

Speaking directly to them, he noted that agriculture extends beyond the planting, harvesting and production of food, but also significantly impacts livelihoods, employment, and opportunities for future generations. "Agriculture is not simply about what we plant, harvest, or produce. It is about families, livelihoods, jobs, and the future we are building for our country," the minister said. He acknowledged the numerous challenges that come with farming, including the long working days, difficult conditions and sacrifices producers make to sustain their operations.

Despite these challenges, he said farmers have continued to play a major role in the country's development and will continue to get government's attention and support

"To every farmer here this morning, I want to express our appreciation for the work you continue to do. We know farming is not a simple undertaking. It takes patience, dedication, and sacrifice," Mustapha said.

Moreover, the minister noted that the conference was a flagship activity of Agriculture Month and reflected the government's commitment to developing a modern, resilient, and globally competitive agriculture sector. He said that the event was designed to go beyond the usual discussions surrounding agricultural development by giving farmers an opportunity to contribute directly to the policies and programmes intended to support them. Mustapha explained that the idea for the conference emerged during one of his outreach engagements, when farmers raised concerns about the lack of a national platform where they could meet and exchange ideas. He said the concern remained with him and eventually led to the establishment of the conference, which he described as an initiative created in response to farmers' calls for greater engagement.



Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha

"This inaugural Farmers Conference was created because we listened. We created it because your voice matters. We created it because government alone cannot transform agriculture," Mustapha said.

He added that while the government had established its development vision through its manifesto, the National Development Strategy and the Low-Carbon Development Strategy, the success of those frameworks depended on the experience and practical knowledge of people working throughout the agricultural sector.

According to the minister, farmers must have a direct role in the implementation, refinement and execution of policies affecting their livelihoods, as their experiences provide an important understanding of the realities of agricultural production.

Mustapha urged farmers to continue working together and contributing to the development of the sector, emphasising that their participation would remain essential to its future.

"Your work is important to Guyana," the Minister told farmers, encouraging them to continue approaching the future with confidence and determination. "Together, let us innovate, nourish and grow," he said.



NEW WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, SKYTRAIL AND DISCOVERY CENTRE PART OF BOTANICAL GARDENS OVERHAUL

Families across Guyana can look forward to a dramatically transformed Botanical Gardens and Zoo within the next three years, as a major government-backed redevelopment promises new opportunities for recreation, learning and wildlife experiences in the heart of Georgetown.

The project, being implemented through the Protected Areas Commission (PAC), is set to convert the aging zoo into a modern Wildlife Sanctuary while introducing attractions designed to make the historic site a premier destination for children, parents, students and visitors.

Among the planned features are a Discovery Centre with an aquarium,



Work in progress at the Guyana Zoo and Botanical Gardens

themed gardens, canoeing facilities, a nature-inspired children's play area and an elevated SkyTrail that will carry visitors through the treetops to a series of observation towers overlooking the gardens.

Foreign Secretary and Chairman of the Protected Areas Commission, Robert Persaud, said the vision is to preserve the identity of the Botanical Gardens while creating new ways for people to connect with nature.

"The vision is for the gardens to continue to be a place of connection, with new ways to experience nature in Georgetown," Persaud told the Department of Public Information (DPI).

For families, the redevelopment is expected to provide significantly more than traditional sightseeing. Plans include shaded seating areas, accessible pathways, improved walkways over the ponds, birdwatching opportunities and expanded spaces for outdoor recreation.

The Discovery Centre is expected to become a major educational attraction, allowing children and students to learn about Guyana's biodiversity through interactive exhibits, wildlife habitats and aquatic displays.

At the same time, animal welfare is being placed at the centre of the redevelopment. Existing zoo enclosures will be replaced by larger, more natural habitats designed to give animals greater freedom of movement and opportunities to express natural behaviours.

The upgraded facility is also expected to play a stronger role in conservation, including wildlife rehabilitation initiatives and breeding programmes for species such as macaws and sun parakeets. Officials say the sanctuary could eventually accommodate wildlife that cannot safely return to the wild and animals surrendered by owners unable to care for them.

Construction is already underway, with work focused on site preparation, demolition of obsolete structures, foundations, drainage systems and internal roads. By the end of 2026, authorities expect most old enclosures to be removed and key infrastructure works substantially completed.

As Georgetown's most recognisable green space undergoes its largest transformation in decades, the redevelopment is positioning the Botanical Gardens not simply as a restored attraction, but as a modern national destination where families can learn, explore and experience Guyana's natural heritage in entirely new ways.

THOMAS STREET SETS NEW STANDARD FOR GEORGETOWN'S PUBLIC SPACES



President Ali reviewing the progress on the first 'Healthy Streets' project

Thomas Street is emerging as a new model for Georgetown's public spaces, with the city's first project under President, Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali's Healthy Streets Initiative combining upgraded infrastructure with a stronger focus on pedestrians, greenery and the everyday experience of the capital.

Stretching from Lamaha Street to Church Street, the avenue is being transformed through a collaboration between the Government of Guyana and the King's Foundation, with the aim of creating a safer, greener and more functional public environment.

President Ali recently inspected the ongoing works alongside Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Priya Manickchand, engineers and members of the project team, reviewing both the progress and design elements being incorporated into the corridor.

The inspection focused on ensuring that the different components of the avenue work together, including the roadway, drainage infrastructure, pedestrian areas and surrounding spaces. The President also provided guidance on design features that could potentially inform similar interventions elsewhere in Georgetown.

The project is intended to go beyond improving the appearance of a single street, introducing an approach to urban development that considers how residents move through and use public spaces.

Minister Manickchand has stressed that implementation must remain on schedule while preserving the project's green character. She specifically called for existing trees to be protected wherever possible, rather than unnecessarily boxed off or removed, so that the landscaping complements the natural environment.



President Ali reviewing the progress on the first 'Healthy Streets' project

MACKENZIE-WISMAR BRIDGE ENTERS TESTING STAGE



Load testing on the new Mackenzie- Wismar Bridge ahead of opening

The new four-lane Mackenzie-Wismar Bridge is entering its final stage before opening to the public, with engineers now testing the 220-metre structure under heavy loads.

Five laden trucks are being driven across the pre-stressed concrete bridge as part of testing to assess its structural integrity, safety and long-term performance.

The toll-free crossing will replace the single-lane bridge that has served Linden since 1966–1967 and long restricted the movement of traffic between Mackenzie and Wismar.

Built at a cost of US$35 million by China Railway Construction (Caribbean) Co. Ltd., the new bridge will feature four vehicular lanes, two pedestrian walkways and clear passage for hopper barges.



Load testing on the new Mackenzie- Wismar Bridge ahead of opening

Roundabouts and expanded four-lane connecting roads will link the crossing to the Linden-Mabura Road and wider highway network.

The bridge forms a key link in the road corridor connecting the coast to the hinterland and onward to Brazil, while significantly increasing traffic capacity through Region 10.

GUYANESE DIASPORA DIGEST
KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED

Guyanese DIASPORA DIGEST

KEEPING THE DIASPORA INFORMED EDITION 129

A NEW STAGE FOR REGION SIX ATHLETES

Region Six is about to have a sporting facility built for bigger ambitions. The new New Amsterdam synthetic track is nearing completion, promising athletes a modern, all-weather venue to train, compete and chase higher levels of performance.

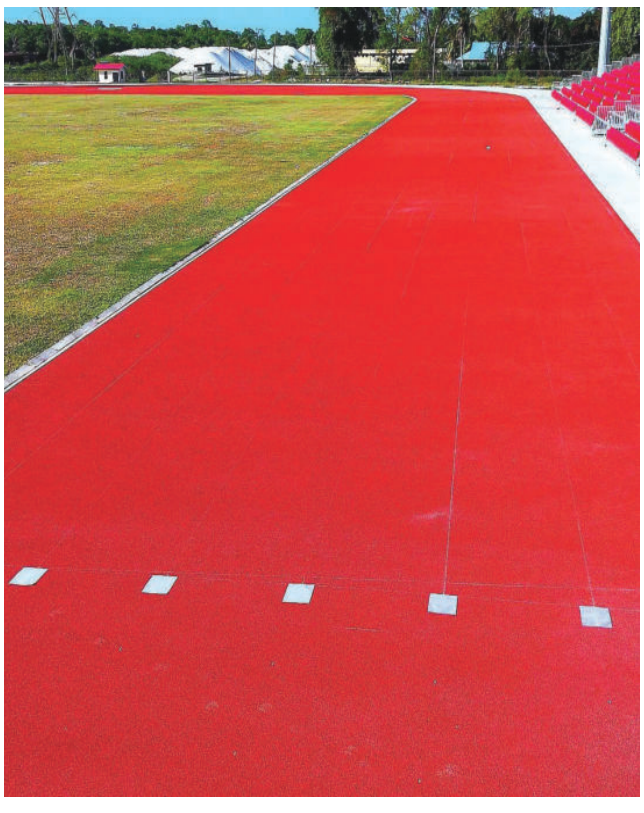
The complex features a synthetic athletics track, all-weather football field, 2,000-seat spectator stands, two pavilions, washrooms and parking, positioning it to host major regional and national competitions.

For athletes, the biggest change will be the ability to train day or night without being held back by weather conditions.

The new complex is expected to become a major sporting hub for Berbice, creating greater opportunities for competition, fitness and the development of the region's next generation of athletes.







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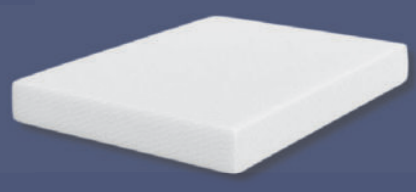
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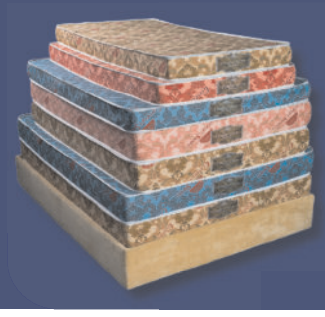
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Elect Norman MacLeod as your Councilor in Ward 13

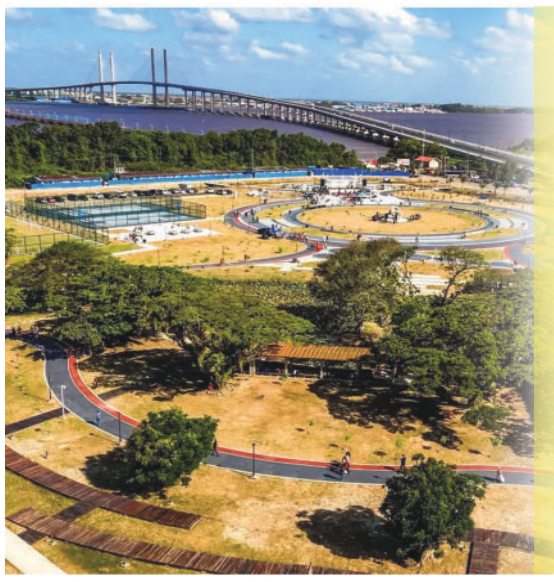


Norman MacLeod is your only choice of Councilor in Ward 13. In order that youth in Toronto be given a choice over gang activities, our Federal Government wants to pour money into Toronto, and Toronto Media Culture.
I was made aware as per representative Patrick Pereira, staffer, Justin Trudeau's Liberal Government, Ministry of Culture.
Liberal Government of Canada, is where Frank McKenna and Justin Trudeau still have a presence.
Frank McKenna, one of our last Finance Ministers and a MacLeod family friend, trusts me, Norman MacLeod.
Justin Trudeau former PMO, had his cottage across the North Miramichi from the Willy Irving, MacLeod camp.
Justin trusts me.
I am still the only man in Toronto Municipal Politics trusted federally and wanted in Toronto council, as insurance against spending Our People's money.
I am trusted, because The Right Hournable Frank McKenna, Pierre Elliot and Justin Trudeau.
Our youth having a choice and way out of gang activities, is my major concern in Toronto. This trust will allow money to flow and smooth out the frictions of an angry youth, and generate more money to Toronto.
Well planned public washroom facilities are required, and will have a public talk back booth feature. This will also promote entertainment lifestyle, while affording opportunity to hold council accountable.

Victory for People

Elect Norman MacLeod Councilor Ward13





Guyana is poised to become one of the world's most compelling tourism destinations, where our extraordinary biodiversity, pristine rainforests, majestic rivers, vibrant culture and rich heritage create unparalleled experiences for visitors. Our vision is to build a world-class, sustainable and internationally competitive tourism sector that attracts strategic investment, strengthens infrastructure, empowers local communities and creates meaningful opportunities for our people. We must transform our natural assets into economic prosperity, position Brand Guyana on the global stage and ensure that tourism becomes a powerful engine of employment, entrepreneurship and national development. We are not simply promoting a destination; we are building a tourism legacy that showcases Guyana to the world while preserving its natural treasures for generations to come.





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