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Thursday October 22 2026. Volume 48, Issue #43 www.equalitynews.ca. For advertising, call 647-216-2359

READY TO SERVE

Meet some of the candidates of Caribbean heritage in Monday's Municipal elections



Akina Lalla (Trinidad) Toronto Ward 21



Robert Bazil. (Guyana) Toronto Ward 24



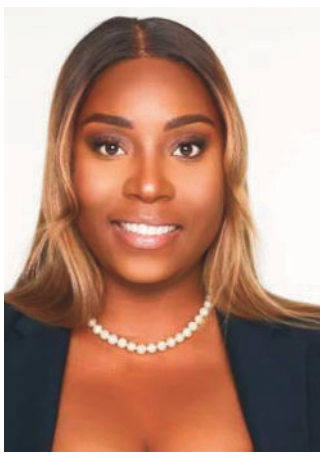
Norman Hamilton (Jamaica) Toronto Ward 1



Michael Samlalsingh. (Trinidad) Pickering



Dr Jamie Dookie (Trinidad) Mississauga



Shelly Cerelli (Jamaica) Vaughn

A number of candidates of Caribbean heritage have thrown their hats into the ring in the upcoming municipal elections in Ontario.

Among them is a familiar face -- Toronto Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson, of Jamaican heritage, who is seeking re-election in Ward 21 (Scarborough).

But a handful of others are seeking to serve in various city halls for the first time, including Norman Hamilton, of Jamaican heritage, who is contesting Ward 1. "Ward 1 deserves leadership that stays connected, responds to concerns and puts people first. Together, we can build a stronger Etobicoke where families, seniors and young people have opportunities to thrive," he notes.

Another first time candidate is Akina Lalla, a social activist who is challenging Thompson in Ward 21. Originally from Trinidad, Akina is campaigning on affordable housing and public safety, two major issues in Toronto.

Dr Jamie Dookie, a former UWI lecturer from Trinidad is running for a city council seat in Mississauga's Ward 5. Among other things, Dr Dookie is campaigning on public safety and affordable living for residents.

In Toronto, Guyana-born Robert Bazil is seeking election as Councillor for Ward 24. An advocate for youth development, he is a former journalist -- the Chief Reporter for the daily Guyana Chronicle -- who expanded into legal services after moving to Ontario in 2008.

In Pickering, Michael Samlalsingh of Trnidadian is contesting Ward 1, and said his decision to enter municipal politics comes as the city continues to experience demographic and economic change.

In the City of Vaughn, Shelly Cerelli, of Jamaican heritage, has officially been certified as a candidate for Mayor of Vaughan in the 2026 Municipal Election, setting up a two-candidate race between her and incumbent Mayor Steven Del Duca.

Cerrelli enters the race as an entrepreneur, business and wealth strategist, founder and community leader with more than 20 years of experience building businesses and working across sectors including real estate, technology, telecommunications and innovation.

While this is not a complete list of all the candidates with Caribbean heritage, now you know that there are several seeking you vote on October 26.

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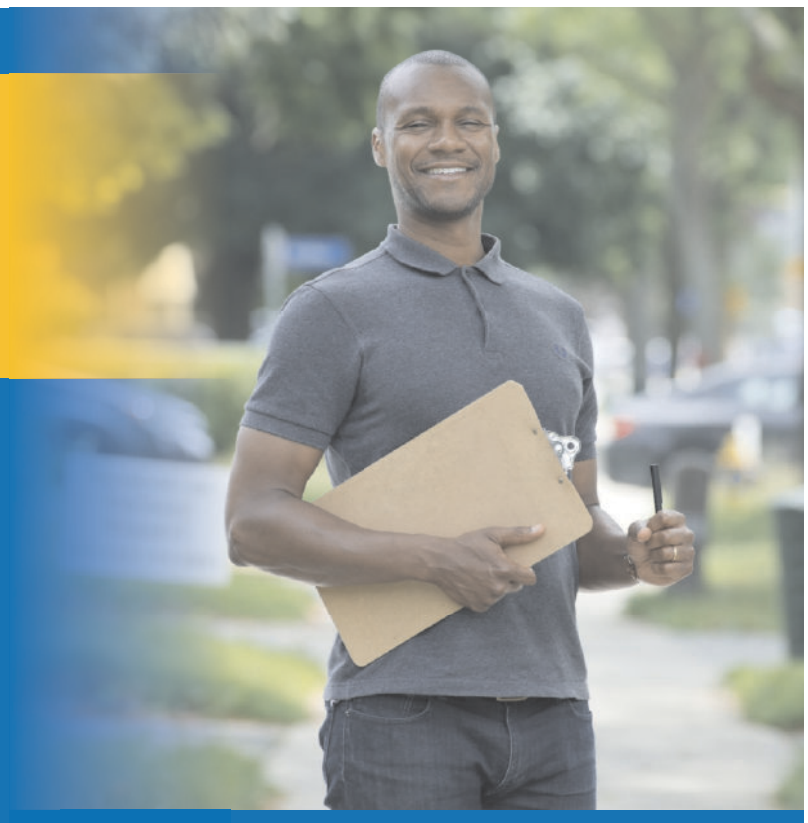
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NO MEANINGFUL PLAN
Relies on more police funding as a council achievement, without a local strategy for hate crime and safety.
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Proposes a full audit to reduce waste and lower the cost of doing business in Toronto.
CITY FINANCES
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PROPERTY TAX INCREASE
Colle voted for every tax increase from 2024–2026.
2024: +9.5%
2025: +6.9%
2026: +2.2%
OPPOSES HIGHER LAND TRANSFER TAX
Supports home ownership and keeping Toronto affordable for families.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
VOTED YES TO HIGHER LAND TRANSFER TAX
• 2023: new higher rates on homes over $3 million.
• 2025: voted to raise those rates again (starting April 2026).
FINISH TRANSIT & REDUCE GRIDLOCK
Proven track record on LRT disruption and zoning protection. Support smarter transit solutions with local input.
TRANSIT & GRIDLOCK
SUPPORTED FOUR-YEAR BATHURST/EGLINTON CLOSURE
Backed the long closure and Lawrence Heights redevelopment without sufficient local solutions.
KEEP TORONTO AFFORDABLE
Opposes unnecessary new fees and higher parking costs.
PARKING & FEES
VOTED YES TO REMOVE $5/HOUR PARKING CAP
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in 2007
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No more vaping: Ali introduces vape ban in Guyana

THE government will impose restrictions on the importation of all vapes and vaping products into Guyana, except those specifically approved by the Minister of Health or the relevant tobacco control authorities, President Dr Irfaan Ali announced on Saturday evening.

In a live address to the nation, President Ali disclosed that Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr Ashni Singh, will shortly sign an order under the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, giving effect to the restrictions.

The move, he explained, follows growing concerns about the widespread and largely unregulated importation, sale and use of vaping products, particularly among schoolchildren and teenagers, and is intended to safeguard public health while allowing for approved medicinal and therapeutic applications.

According to President Ali, the new proposed restriction on the importation of vapes of all kinds, except as approved by the Minister of Health, or the National Tobacco Control Council or Tobacco Control Board.

He said the decision was informed by consultations with parents, teachers, children, religious leaders and community representatives who have expressed increasing concern about the accessibility and use of vaping products among young people.

"As a responsible government, as a listening government, we have a duty to protect public health, particularly the health and well-being of our children and young people and to ensure that products presenting potential risks to consumers are subject to appropriate oversight and control," President Ali said.

The Head of State explained that Guyana's decision is consistent with measures being pursued internationally, as countries strengthen regulations governing the importation and distribution of vaping products.



The vape ban excludes products approved by the Ministry of Health

According to the President, although vaping products are frequently marketed as alternatives to conventional cigarettes, they are not without health risks.

He pointed to warnings from the World Health Organization (WHO) about the potential consequences of vaping, particularly for children and adolescents.

WHO has declared youth nicotine dependency an urgent global emergency since tobacco companies have structurally shifted their business models to explicitly capture children and teenagers using heavily engineered, chemically modified e-cigarettes and alternative nicotine delivery systems.

WHO revealed that at least 15 million adolescents aged 13–15 are actively using electronic cigarettes globally. This counts alongside 40 million children who use other tobacco products and in countries reporting comprehensive data, children are 9 times more likely to vape than adults.

According to President Ali, "Vaping products can expose users to toxic substances that pose risk to human health," highlighting the potential for nicotine addiction and its impact on brain development among children and adolescents.

He also warned that exposure during pregnancy presents risks to the developing foetus, while concerns remain about respiratory health and the potential long-term consequences associated with vaping.

He said the issue extends beyond physical health, as early exposure to vaping products could also have broader social and mental health implications for young people.

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

He explained that the increasing availability of vaping products, including those containing various additives and alternative substances, has contributed to growing concern among parents and educators.

The President disclosed that his discussions with teachers, children and parents revealed the extent of concern surrounding vaping within the school system.

"I've had discussion with many teachers. I've had discussion with children and parents, and this issue is of serious concern for our teachers, our children, religious leaders and our parents," he said.

President Ali stressed that protecting children from vaping requires action not only from the Government but also from families, schools and wider society.

"We have to protect our children. We have to protect our schools. We have to protect our society. We have to adopt measures that are relevant to the challenges we face as a society," he declared.

He identified the use and misuse of vaping products among teenagers and young children, including within schools, as one of the challenges demanding decisive national action.

The President also urged parents, religious leaders, teachers and other influential figures to educate young people about the dangers of vaping, particularly the risks associated with products containing additives.

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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

Get out and vote

Hopefully, before you got to this page you met some of the candidates standing for municipal elections in Ontario who are of Caribbean heritage on earlier pages.

They and other like-minded individuals have done their part by standing up to serve in what is often a thankless job.

Now is the time for the rest of us to do our part and vote.

We're not suggesting that you vote for those featured in this paper because of their roots, but rather select those you think are best to serve your and your community's interests.

Historically, municipal elections have the lowest voter turn-out of all three elections we are asked to vote in over the course of four years.

It is puzzling why this is so, because of all three, municipal is the one that impacts us the most, the one closest to where we live.

It is City Hall -- whichever city you live in -- that dictates the things that matter most to you, from property taxes to garbage collection. It's the level of government that maintains your road, oversees your transit and even make sure our communities are safe by ensuring we have proper policing.

The provincial and federal governments are important, yes, but they are also further removed from us.

We are more likely to meet and know our city councilors than our MPPs or MPs.

It is the municipal election that gives us the opportunity to make that connection to the people who directly serve us -- people we can call or contact when we have any issue that directly affects us and our homes.

Each councillor is a direct line to City Hall and the Mayor's office. And each one has the weight behind them to highlight our issues directly to the actual source of power -- the Mayor.

Toronto sets the pace for almost all of the surrounding municipalities, and it is therefore extremely important that we elect a Mayor who will handle that job in the best interests of the people.

Though there are numerous candidates for Mayor of Toronto, two have emerged as the front runners: the incumbent Olivia Chow, and her main challenger Brad Bradford.

Both Chow and Bradford have outlined competing plans for Toronto, covering transit, housing, affordability, public safety and employment.

Chow's pledges include capping TTC fares at 10 rides a week, building 10,000 additional rental homes and creating 15,000 youth jobs.

Bradford also focuses on improving transit times promising shovels in the ground for a new LRT in Scarborough by 2030 -- a part of Toronto that often gets overlooked by City Hall.

He has also promised to eliminate the municipal land transfer tax on qualifying homes, cut water bills by 25 per cent and hire 1,000 additional frontline police officers.

On the water issue, however, a number of voters seem to be alarmed over his plan to turn control over to the provincial government, which then opens it up to privatization -- which means the basic right of clean water in your taps could end up costing more.

But we're not here to judge, just inform.

Chow is running on a four year record which saw property taxes rise by some 20%. But she has also managed to keep the city relatively safe without committing to over-policing, like her rival.

The country's diverse communities have a tough choice to make come Monday: go with the proven or the unknown.

And that could apply to every race in every municipality.

This week, we've shown some of the choices out there, and we commend every person who has decided to stand for election for making the tough decision to do so.

Running municipalities in a country like Canada is no easy task. It's the one that gets the most negative feedback, and by no measurement is it a cushy job. We applaud you for standing up for us.

Now go out and vote. Let's keep our homes and communities places we'd like to live and raise our families.

Mashramani turns work into celebration

Dear Editor,

A FLOAT is a peculiar asset. Its owner spends money so that everybody else can look at it.

The Mashramani's costume and float parade sits inside Guyana's Republic celebrations alongside calypso, soca, chutney, steel band and other competitions. Ministries, businesses, schools, designers and bands invest resources in presentations meant to be judged publicly and shared nationally.

Franz Boas' work on the Northwest Coast helped make the potlatch a classic case in anthropology. Later scholarship and Kwakwaka'wakw institutions such as the U'mista Cultural Centre have made the necessary correction to simplistic descriptions.

Potlatch is not just conspicuous waste or a party with gifts. It is tied to witnessing, family history, status, rights, obligation and the public recognition of relationships.

That distinction matters here. I am not suggesting a historical connection between this carnival tradition and Northwest Coast ceremonial life. There is none to claim. The comparison is functional. It asks what happens when materials, skills and labour acquire their greatest value only after they are exposed to other people.

This changes how the visible object should be evaluated. The raw materials may be cheap or expensive, but neither tells us much about the finished social value. Time, recognisable style, local technique and the fact of public display become part of the object. A piece made for carnival carries the maker's reputation into the street.

That is why handmade and locally legible carnival forms often survive even when cheaper substitutes are available. They do work that mass-produced decoration cannot. They tell spectators who made this, where it belongs, and why this community recognises it.

There is also an environmental implication. If public meaning comes from craft and provenance rather than sheer volume, carnival can be generous without becoming disposable. Reuse, repair and locally made materials are not necessarily modern restrictions on tradition. They can strengthen the very thing that makes the tradition worth seeing.

This perspective also guards against a lazy use of the word potlatch. Northwest Coast ceremonial traditions deserve to be understood on their own terms. Comparison is valuable only when it clarifies both sides rather than pretending, they are the same.

Mashramani converts preparation into public recognition, which is one of the oldest ways communities turn expenditure into status.

Yours truly,

Charles E. A. Lincoln IV

Send us your letters

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Publisher: Bhaskar Sharma
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Editor: Nishad Sharma
Annual subscription: $104.00 (including postage)

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Fourplex, sixplex buildings to speed up housing development in Toronto

By Milan Maharaj
LJI REPORTER



Fourplex and sixplex buildings will maximise available housing in existing spaces

Torontonians can now get free design for fourplex and sixplex buildings as Toronto aims to streamline the process of developing homes on already existing residential sites.

The city of Toronto announced on Oct. 2 that it is extending its Pre-approved Building Plans Program with designs suitable for both narrow and wide lots. It will help speed up the process of designing multi-unit homes and increase housing development within the city.

These designs come after the City of Toronto's program for garden and laneway homes. They have been designed keeping in mind aspects of accessibility, climate change, cost of construction, and buildability. Sustainable features, bicycle parking and garbage storage have also been kept in consideration while designing these buildings. These designs conform to Ontario Building Code.

Fourplex buildings, which are buildings that include four units in one structure, are allowed in all parts of Toronto. Sixplex buildings that consist of six units are allowed only in certain zones, depending on the particular zoning regulations. Building permits can be obtained by those property owners who meet zoning regulations related to their proposal.

In 2023, Toronto permitted multiplex structures containing four units across Toronto within its policy of Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods. This is aimed at providing more options for housing in neighbourhoods where housing was previously occupied by detached and semi-detached houses. There has been permission for six-unit buildings in select regions, including portions of Toronto, East York, and Scarborough North.

The city claims that pre-approved designs will allow homeowners to save time due to pre-designed construction. However, it should be noted that the designs do not exclude any requirements or the necessity of obtaining a building permit.

It is necessary to hire an architect or another qualified person to modify the design according to the peculiarities of the property. It is necessary to prepare drawings and documents for a building permit. In addition, every application is analyzed in order to ensure that the project corresponds to the building codes and zoning bylaws.

The designs have been made by the architectural firm that was competitively chosen through a procurement process. Moreover, this project also works together with the Housing Design Catalogue of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, providing housing designs in order to assist with construction.

Even with the availability of free plans, constructing a multiplex theater could still be financially difficult for those undertaking the task. The owner needs to look at the cost of construction, funding, professional fees, as well as whether the land is suitable for construction of the building. Therefore, while lowering design costs may prove helpful to some homeowners, it does not ensure affordability and feasibility of the project.

Multiplexes can be considered the attempt of the city of Toronto to increase housing alternatives other than individual houses or large apartments buildings. It is possible to provide more housing without having to find a completely new development location.

The strategy can give more choices to the homeowners to build rental units or independent dwellings for their families. However, depending on the amount of property owners willing to undertake such a project, it will help increase the number of dwellings on the residential lots.The city's program does not guarantee that construction will be cheaper or faster in every case. Site conditions, construction costs, financing and the requirements of individual properties can still affect whether a project moves forward.The new designs are available through the city's Pre-Approved Building Plans Program. Homeowners can review the options and use the relevant plan when preparing a building permit application.Toronto's latest initiative aims to reduce one barrier to small-scale housing construction by making professional designs more accessible. Whether it leads to a significant increase in new homes will depend on homeowners' uptake and their ability to meet the remaining approval and construction requirements.

Building more units on current residential lots may boost housing potential without needing all the housing units to come from apartment buildings. Nonetheless, other issues to consider include the impact of multiplexes on infrastructure, trees, transport, waste management, and schools. All these concerns will continue to be relevant as the city tries to build more housing in its neighborhoods.



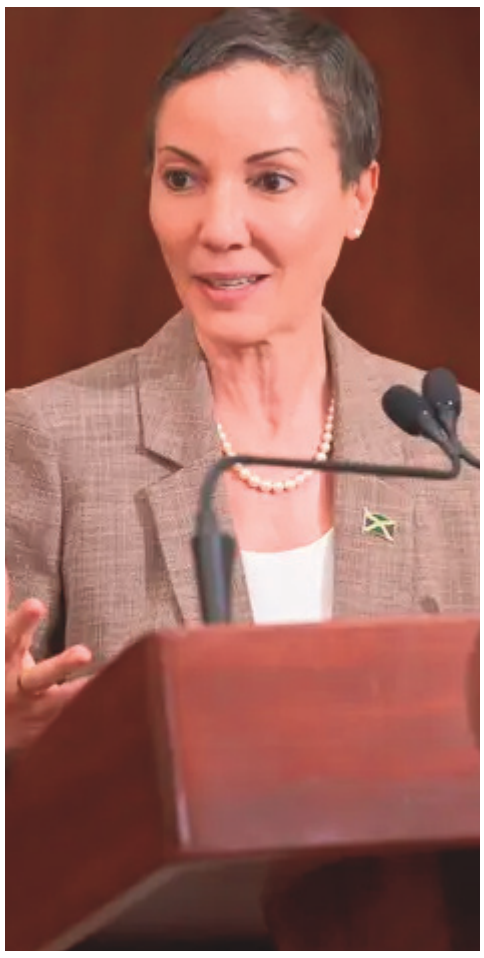
First group of US third-country nationals arrives in Jamaica; Opposition alarmed

The first group of third-country nationals (TCNs) from the United States arrived in Jamaica on Tuesday, as the Government defended its agreement to facilitate their transit through the island and the Opposition People's National Party (PNP) renewed calls for the full terms of the arrangement to be made public.

The group arrived at Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston and is being processed for 90-day landing status under the agreement between the Jamaican and US governments.

The individuals will be housed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which is responsible for their care, accommodation and onward movement to their countries of origin or other receiving countries. Jamaica's role will be limited to receiving the individuals and transporting them to the IOM, the Government said.

The arrival follows an announcement on Monday by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and the Ministry of National Security and Peace that the first flight was expected shortly. The ministries said the two governments had finalised operating procedures governing the arrangement, including safeguards and parameters intended to ensure its implementation in a safe, orderly and lawful manner. The IOM had also agreed to provide support services.



Kamina Johnson Smith

Under the arrangement, no more than 25 TCNs will be permitted to transit through Jamaica every two weeks. The memorandum of understanding also provides for the suspension of the programme if 10 individuals apply for asylum in Jamaica or seek to remain in the country through other humanitarian processes.

The Government has defended the agreement amid questions raised by Opposition Spokesperson on National Security Fitz Jackson, saying safeguards were negotiated with Jamaica's interests and the welfare of its people in mind.

"We have made every effort to negotiate this transit agreement with protection of Jamaica and the Jamaican people in mind — also in accordance with the principles of safe and orderly migration, consistent with domestic and international law," the Government said.

Foreign Affairs Minister Kamina Johnson Smith has maintained that Jamaica will not permit TCNs with criminal antecedents to enter under the programme. The Government noted that some other countries had agreed to receive individuals with criminal backgrounds, but said Jamaica would not do so.

Johnson Smith has also said the arrangement would not be funded by the Jamaican Government. The IOM will provide care and accommodation while facilitating the individuals' onward movement, with the aim of returning them to their countries of origin or transferring them to other receiving countries.

The Government has also addressed questions about why the agreement has not been published, explaining that the United States had not agreed to its release. It said the lack of public disclosure was not due to anything prejudicial in the arrangement.

However, the arrival of the first group has intensified the PNP's calls for the agreement to be tabled in Parliament.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Opposition described the Government's handling of the arrangement as unacceptable, arguing that Jamaicans should be able to examine the terms of an agreement with implications for national security, the country's international obligations and its reputation.

Jackson said the Government was asking Jamaicans to accept the arrangement without providing sufficient details about how it would be implemented.

He said Parliament should be informed about where the individuals would be housed, the security arrangements governing their stay and who would be responsible for monitoring them.

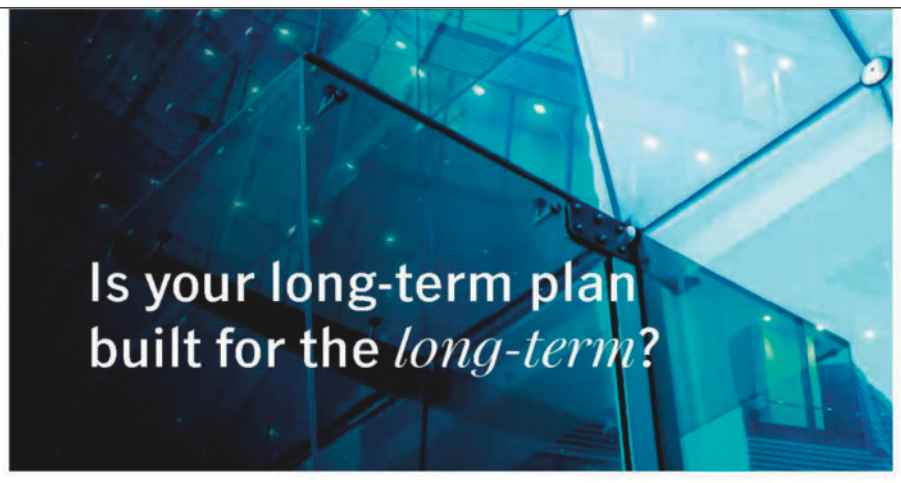
The Opposition is also seeking clarity on Jamaica's potential legal liabilities, how cases would be handled if receiving countries refused to accept the individuals, and how security, health and logistical support would be managed.

Opposition Spokesperson on Foreign, Regional and Diaspora Affairs Donna Scott-Mottley said the public deserved full transparency on an agreement of such significance.

The PNP said it supports safe and orderly migration and values Jamaica's partnership with the United States. However, it argued that the arrangement should not be implemented without parliamentary scrutiny.

The Government, meanwhile, has reiterated that the agreement includes safeguards to protect Jamaica.

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75% of Small Business Bureau-supported firms remain operational – Rodrigues

UNDERLINING the importance of continued support for entrepreneurs beyond the start-up phase of a business, Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues, said 75 per cent of businesses that have been monitored by the Small Business Bureau (SBB) over the last six years are still in operation.

The government is working to bolster small businesses, expand Guyana's tourism industry and create economic activities outside the oil and gas sector, Rodrigues said, while appearing on the Starting Point podcast, which was aired on Sunday.

Over the six years, the minister said more than 7,000 businesses were visited, which allowed the bureau to monitor their progress and see where more help was needed.

She said small-business assistance was not only financial grants but also training, mentorship, follow-up support and advice on financial management, marketing, packaging, and accounting.

The bureau also assists entrepreneurs in understanding business-compliance requirements and national standards, particularly when preparing to enter larger markets and seeking export opportunities, Rodrigues said.



Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Susan Rodrigues

The minister said that the SBB provided grants of one billion dollars to almost 4,000 small businesses between 2020 and 2023.

She also said that in the past six years, the bureau's loan-guaranty programme has provided the small-business community with some $1.6 billion in commercial financing to 177 small businesses. More than half of the beneficiaries were women-owned businesses.

From 2020 to 2026, the bureau registered 6,511 businesses and sponsored 493 of them to participate in local, regional, and international trade fairs and expos.

Rodrigues said the initiatives are part of wider efforts to promote entrepreneurship and ensure that small businesses can contribute to Guyana's economic development.

Tourism-wise, Rodrigues said Guyana welcomed 453,489 visitor arrivals in 2025, an increase of 22 per cent from 2024.

She said she was optimistic that the country would surpass that number by 2026, stressing the importance of marketing Guyana internationally and giving visitors the chance to experience the country's attractions.

The minister recalled Guyana's hosting of the Caribbean Tourism Organization's State of the Tourism Industry Conference, which attracted over 300 delegates, including representatives from 20 international media outlets.

The event provided an opportunity to market Guyana's tourism product as well as to engage regional and international stakeholders. Among the tourism-related activities was a youth congress, part of a broader effort to engage young people in the industry.

International exposure, big events, conferences, and festivals still matter to draw visitors, Rodrigues said. She also stressed the importance of a predictable calendar of events to assist visitors in planning their trips.

Along with international promotion, she pointed to the importance of encouraging Guyanese to travel around their country through domestic tourism, including community-based and sustainable tourism opportunities.

There have been attempts to make domestic tourism more accessible.

Rodrigues also spoke of efforts to improve access to tourism for Guyanese citizens and members of the diaspora.

"After consultations, by February 2026, about six major hotels had special rates for Guyanese citizens and [the] diaspora," she said.

The minister mentioned the discounted tours on World Tourism Day and said that the packages that were sold at a 50 per cent discount were fully booked. But she did admit that domestic travel, especially air travel to hinterland destinations, is still a concern.





Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation, Deodat Indar and GUYSOL Programme Coordinator, Amir Dillawar, represented Guyana at the forum

Guyana's push towards renewable energy wins top regional award

GUYANA'S drive to expand renewable energy has earned regional recognition, with the Guyana Utility Scale Solar Photovoltaic (GUYSOL) Programme winning the Best Clean Energy Programme Award at the 2026 Caribbean Renewable Energy Forum (CREF) Industry Awards in Panama.

The programme, which has already delivered five solar farms adding 18 megawatts-peak (MWp) of renewable energy capacity, is set to expand further with three additional solar facilities planned for Linden.

According to a press release from the Ministry of Public Utilities and Aviation, subject Minister Deodat Indar, and GUYSOL Programme Coordinator, Amir Dillawar, represented Guyana at the forum and received the award last week.

The achievement highlights Guyana's ongoing efforts to diversify its energy mix and advance its clean-energy transition under the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030, championed by President, Dr Irfaan Ali and Vice-president Dr Bharrat Jagdeo.

The GUYSOL Programme is executed by Guyana Power and Light Inc. (GPL) and is financed through Guyana's forest-climate earnings under its partnership with the Government of Norway. The funding is channelled through the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF), administered by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), with support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

The programme builds on the Guyana–Norway climate partnership established in 2009, which helped lay the foundation for Guyana's forest conservation and climate-financing initiatives.

The country has been pressing ahead with plans to slash electricity costs by 50 per cent nationwide through a phased programme of solar installations and other renewable energy projects.

Speaking at a recent press conference, President, Dr Irfaan Ali said the reduction was a key manifesto commitment and confirmed that some communities are already benefiting from lower tariffs.

He noted that areas such as Bartica and parts of Region One have seen initial cuts following the commissioning of solar farms and battery storage.

"One of the things that we have committed to in the manifesto is the reduction in the cost of electricity, and we are fully committed to the reduction of that cost, and that is to bring it down by 50 per cent for consumers across the country," he had said, adding:-

"We have started, especially in areas where we had the solar installation and where we had the battery back-up system. In those areas, we have been able to already announce phased reduction in the cost of electricity. Both in Bartica when I was there on the cabinet outreach, and I think in Region One, we have addressed the issue of a phased reduction.

In Bartica, a 1.5-megawatt solar photovoltaic farm is now supplying power to the Region Seven community.

This was an investment of more than $703 million, has resulted in an output of 6,148 drums of diesel, with electricity costs now being reduced by 25 per cent.

Dr Ali said similar assessments are under way for other communities equipped with renewable systems, including solar projects in Region Two, Leguan and Wakenaam, as well as hydro-powered Lethem.

"I've committed to, in other areas, for example, in Region Two, where we have the solar system, and in Laguan and Wakenam, where we have that solar system to look also at the phased reduction there," the Head of State had told reporters.

"Lethem is also one community where we have the hydro… those analyses are being conducted so that though the initial phased reduction, the tariff can be looked at in those communities. So, we are committed to this, and the consumers will definitely benefit," he told reporters, while assuring consumers they would "benefit tremendously" as the programme expands.

Guyana has rapidly expanded its energy infrastructure. Under its Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) the country has taken a transformative approach to energy that seeks to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels, by diversifying energy sources and ensuring affordable, reliable energy access for all Guyanese.

The aim is to integrate renewable resources such as solar, hydro, wind, biomass, and natural gas to meet growing energy demand, while keeping emissions low.

A Night of Elegance, Hope and Celebration: TCCF Marks 26 Years of Changing Lives

Dressed in their finest evening gowns and tuxedos, guests gathered beneath the enchanting purple glow of a beautifully transformed ballroom as The Caribbean Children Foundation (TCCF) celebrated its 26th Anniversary Angel Gala on Saturday, October 10, 2026.

The atmosphere was electric. From the warmth of familiar faces and the excitement of new connections to the music, laughter and anticipation that filled the room, the evening embodied the very best of Caribbean hospitality. Yet behind the elegance and festivities was a purpose far greater than the celebration itself.

For 26 years, TCCF has helped over 500 critically ill children from the Caribbean access specialized medical treatment, offering families hope when the care their children desperately need is beyond their reach.

What makes this achievement particularly remarkable is that TCCF is led and operated entirely by volunteers. From organizing fundraising events and securing sponsorships to coordinating with medical partners and supporting families, dedicated individuals freely contribute their time, expertise and resources to ensure that children in need have a chance at a healthier future.

Their commitment has transformed a shared desire to help into a lasting humanitarian legacy.

This year's gala brought that mission to life through the story of Aida, a courageous 16-year-old from Antigua and Barbuda living with Ebstein's anomaly, a rare and complex congenital heart condition. Aida is scheduled to undergo her twelfth surgery at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids).



Aida and her family at the TCCF gala

A moving video introduced guests to Aida and her family, revealing the challenges of navigating a complex medical journey and the extraordinary determination of parents who will do whatever it takes to help their child.

In one of the evening's defining moments, Gala Chairperson Cindy Ross invited Aida to stand, representing the more than 500 TCCF Angels whose lives the foundation has touched. Her parents and sister were then invited to rise, honouring the strength of families who refuse to give up, even when the path forward seems uncertain.

She then recognized the dedicated medical teams from SickKids and Gift of Life International, whose expertise and compassion make lifesaving treatment possible, before inviting the entire audience to rise in recognition of the generosity and collective commitment that sustain TCCF's mission.

The room erupted in heartfelt applause, creating a moving display of love, unity and support. It was a moment that gave human meaning to TCCF's 26 years of service, reminding everyone that behind every child helped is a family whose hopes, struggles and dreams matter.

Adding to the emotion of the evening, Aida and her mother performed Amazing Grace as a heartfelt expression of gratitude to the community whose generosity is helping make her medical care possible.

A major highlight was the presentation of a $25,000 cheque to SickKids toward Aida's treatment. This contribution reflects TCCF's longstanding commitment to children's healthcare, with more than $750,000 donated to SickKids since the foundation's inception.

(Equality News is a media sponsor of TCCF.)

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

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

Key priorities of the WGC include:

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

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

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

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

Guyanese independence activist Eusi Kwayana dies at 101

Veteran Guyanese politician, educator and Working People's Alliance (WPA) co-founder Eusi Kwayana has died at the age of 101, the party announced in a joint statement with his family on Sunday.

Known as the "Sage of Buxton," Kwayana was a prominent figure in Guyana's independence movement whose political and cultural activism spanned more than eight decades.

The WPA described him as an elder, teacher and mentor who defended vulnerable people and remained committed to Guyana's development throughout his life.

"We give thanks for his life, his wisdom, his guidance and above all, his example," the party said.

The statement did not disclose the date, location or cause of his death.

Born Sydney King, Kwayana was involved with the original People's Progressive Party (PPP) before joining the People's National Congress (PNC). He later co-founded the WPA in 1974.

He served as a parliamentarian and Cabinet member in the PPP government formed in 1953, and held the positions of assistant general secretary of the PPP and general secretary of the PNC. He also edited the PNC newspaper New Nation.



Working People's Alliance (WPA) co-founder Eusi Kwayana

Within the WPA, Kwayana served as an executive member and parliamentarian, and played a leading editorial role in the party's publications, Open Word and Dayclean. The party remembered him as an organiser and mobiliser whose integrity and independent thinking shaped his political work.

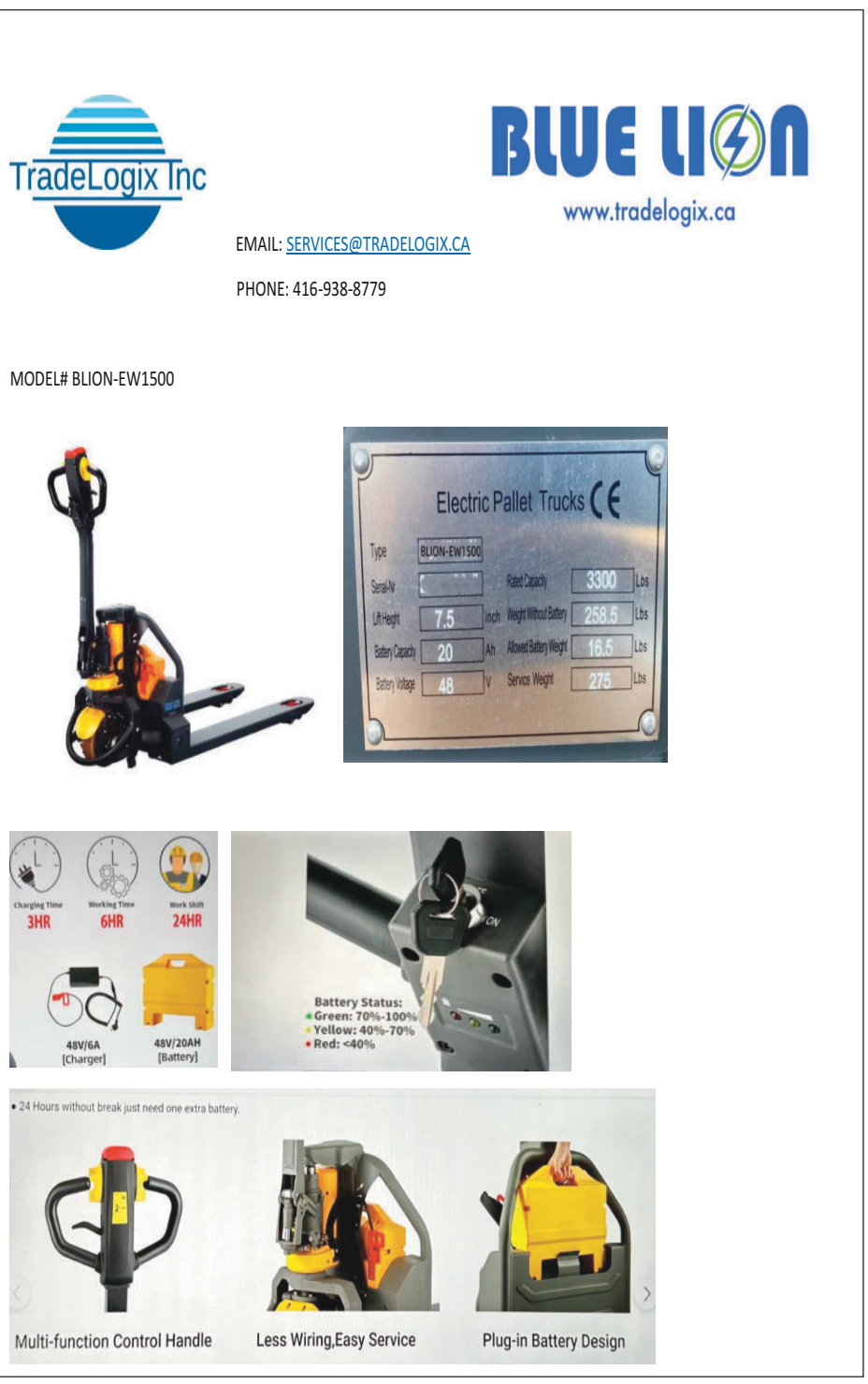
Beyond party politics, Kwayana held several public-sector leadership positions between 1964 and 1971. These included heading the National Land Settlement Committee and chairing the Guyana Marketing Corporation. He also chaired committees focused on cooperative insurance and the transformation of the Guyana Cooperative Credit Society into a cooperative bank.

Kwayana was also a leading advocate for African Guyanese cultural awareness. He co-founded the African Society for Racial Equality in 1961 and the African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa (ASCRIA) in 1964. Both organisations promoted cultural awareness, pride and dignity among African Guyanese.

He served as ASCRIA's coordinating elder and adopted the name Eusi Kwayana, which the WPA said means "Black Man of Guyana" in Swahili.

The party urged Guyanese to celebrate his life and contributions to the country.

"Farewell African star, Guyanese treasure and Caribbean wise man," it said.





Two Canadian airlines eye direct flights to Guyana – Minister Indar

AT LEAST two Canadian airlines have expressed serious interest in introducing direct flights to Guyana, with the carriers already indicating possible commencement dates, Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation Deodat Indar disclosed on Monday.

Speaking at the Canada–Guyana Business Forum 2026, hosted by the Canada–Guyana Chamber of Commerce at the Atlantic Suites Hotel in Georgetown, Minister Indar revealed that discussions with several Canadian airlines have been progressing as the Government seeks to strengthen air connectivity and make Guyana more accessible to international investors, tourists and the diaspora.

While declining to identify the airlines or disclose the proposed dates, the minister said the level of interest was encouraging.

"At least two of them have said to me that they're very interested in the market," Indar said, adding that the operators had provided dates when they expected to commence flights.

He explained that improving direct air access remains a priority, particularly as Guyana's expanding economy continues to attract international businesses seeking opportunities in energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, and other sectors.

Drawing on his experience in the private sector, Indar recalled leading a delegation of 11 Guyanese business representatives to Newfoundland and Labrador in 2017–2018 to examine Canada's oil-and-gas industry and local-content framework.

He said that although there was significant interest among Canadian businesses in Guyana's emerging petroleum sector, lengthy travel arrangements created challenges for prospective investors.

Travellers from Newfoundland and Labrador, for example, frequently had to connect through Toronto before continuing to Georgetown, adding several hours to their journeys.

According to Indar, those arrangements discouraged some businesses from travelling to Guyana, despite their interest in establishing commercial partnerships.

"What is sense to have this wonderful investment destination where nobody can reach you?" the minister questioned.

He stressed that expanding direct flights would help remove such barriers, improve business mobility, and support the Government's broader efforts to position Guyana as a competitive investment destination.

The latest discussions build on ongoing efforts to attract additional international carriers to Guyana's growing aviation market.

In September, during the CAPA Airline Leader Summit Latin America & Caribbean in Panama City, Minister Indar publicly encouraged major regional carriers, including LATAM Airlines and Arajet, to explore opportunities in Guyana.

At that forum, he highlighted the country's expanding economy, increasing passenger traffic and growing demand for air travel as reasons for international airlines to consider establishing new routes.

Indar had also disclosed that the number of airlines serving Guyana increased from four in 2020 to 16 in 2026, reflecting the expansion of the country's aviation sector.

Air connectivity between Guyana and Canada has already improved, with Canadian carrier Air Transat launching direct services between Toronto and Georgetown in December 2025.

Caribbean Airlines also introduced daily non-stop flights on the route in July 2026.

The Government is simultaneously investing in airport infrastructure to accommodate increased passenger traffic and facilitate further expansion.

Among the major projects is a second terminal at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA), along with plans for new airport facilities in Berbice and Lethem.

Indar also outlined plans to improve approximately 60 hinterland airstrips, including 34 projects for which the tender process had closed and bids were under evaluation.

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Trinidad and Tobago presents TT$63.3 billion budget

Trinidad and Tobago's government has presented a TT$63.3 billion budget for fiscal 2027, proposing a range of tax changes aimed at increasing revenue, alongside measures to provide tax relief to pensioners and expand investment opportunities.

Finance Minister Davendranath Tancoo presented the budget to Parliament on Monday, projecting revenue of TT$59.73 billion and expenditure of TT$63.37 billion, leaving a fiscal deficit of TT$3.64 billion, equivalent to 2.1% of gross domestic product (GDP).

The budget assumes an oil price of US$77 per barrel and a natural gas price of US$5 per million British thermal units.

Among the proposed measures, the government plans to limit businesses' use of carried-forward losses to 75% of chargeable profits in a given year, effective January 1, 2027. The measure is expected to generate TT$430 million.

The government also proposes increasing the unemployment levy on petroleum companies from 5% to 8% and raising withholding taxes on certain distributions to non-residents.

Other measures include applying value-added tax to digital services supplied by non-resident providers, effective March 1, 2027, and amending withholding tax rules for payments to overseas service providers.

Meanwhile, the government plans to increase the annual personal allowance for pensioners to TT$102,000 from January 1, 2027, providing an estimated TT$11 million in tax relief.

The budget also proposes a five-cent-per-kilowatt-hour surcharge on residential electricity consumption exceeding 3,000 kilowatt-hours per billing period. The measure is expected to generate TT$17.8 million and help fund electricity subsidies for low-consumption households.

In the financial sector, the government plans to introduce savings bonds in Trinidad and Tobago and US dollars, allowing individuals to invest in government securities in smaller amounts.

Tancoo said the wider budget aims to attract investment, expand production, create jobs and strengthen economic resilience.

The budget debate is scheduled to begin Friday.



Finance Minister Devanand Tancoo

Guyana says 'full force of law' will apply after shooting involving opposition leader

The Guyanese government says the "full force of the law" will be applied following an incident involving Opposition Leader Azruddin Mohamed, who was arrested along with two other men after gunshots were reportedly fired near the home of a senior police officer.

In a statement Tuesday, the government said Mohamed and the two men were allegedly filming the home of Senior Superintendent of Police Prem Narine on Barr Street in Kitty around midnight Monday.

According to the statement, the men were traveling in a dark-colored car with heavily tinted windows when gunshots rang out from the vehicle. Spent shells were subsequently found on the road near Narine's home, the government said.

Narine reportedly opened fire on the car with his service handgun, triggering a chase involving law enforcement officers. The vehicle was intercepted, with Mohamed found in the back seat and the two other men in the front, according to the statement.



Azruddin Mohamed makes a court appearance

An unlicensed firearm was allegedly found in the vehicle. The three men were arrested and remain in police custody, the government said.

The government also linked the incident to Mohamed's ongoing extradition proceedings, in which Narine is a key witness. The senior police officer is currently testifying in the case at the Georgetown Magistrates' Court.

According to the government, Mohamed's Facebook page previously published photographs of Narine and his family, including his minor son, alongside President Irfaan Ali. The statement said Narine had told the court under oath that he feared for his life and his family's safety.

The government further said Narine had testified that Mohamed posed a threat to national security and was implicated in several killings, based on information obtained by the Guyana Police Force. These remain claims attributed to the government's statement.

The government warned that the incident could have implications beyond Guyana, particularly for the safety of witnesses in the extradition proceedings and any subsequent criminal trial in the United States.

Mohamed's extradition proceedings in Guyana are preliminary to a potential trial in the United States, where he could face criminal proceedings if extradited.

"The State has a duty to protect its justice system from interference and perversions," the government said, adding that witness safety was essential to the administration of justice.

It said investigations by law enforcement agencies were ongoing and that the U.S. Department of Justice was being kept informed of the developments.

The statement did not detail the specific charges, if any, laid against Mohamed or the two other men in connection with Monday night's incident.


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OPPOSES HIGHER LAND TRANSFER TAX
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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.

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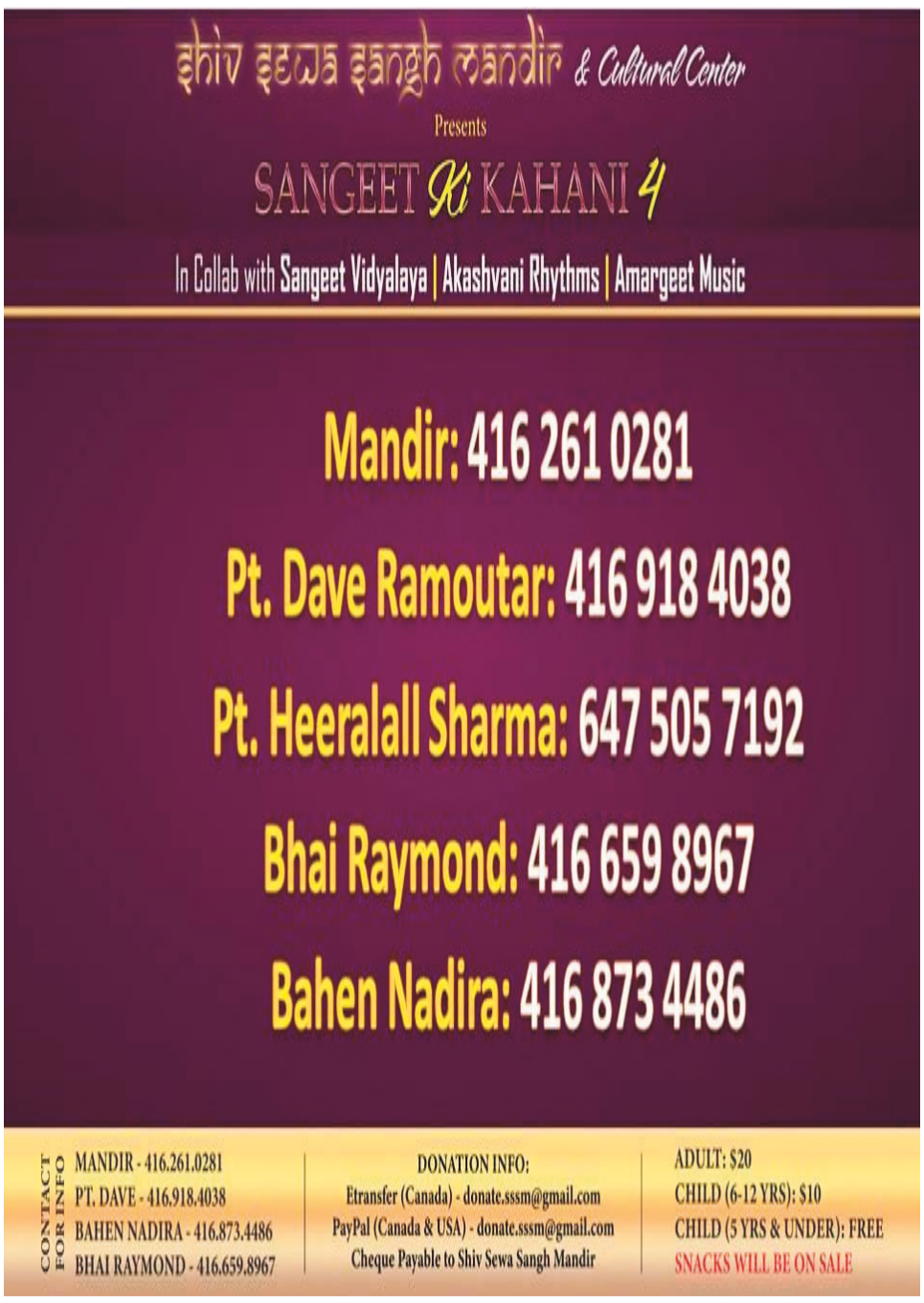
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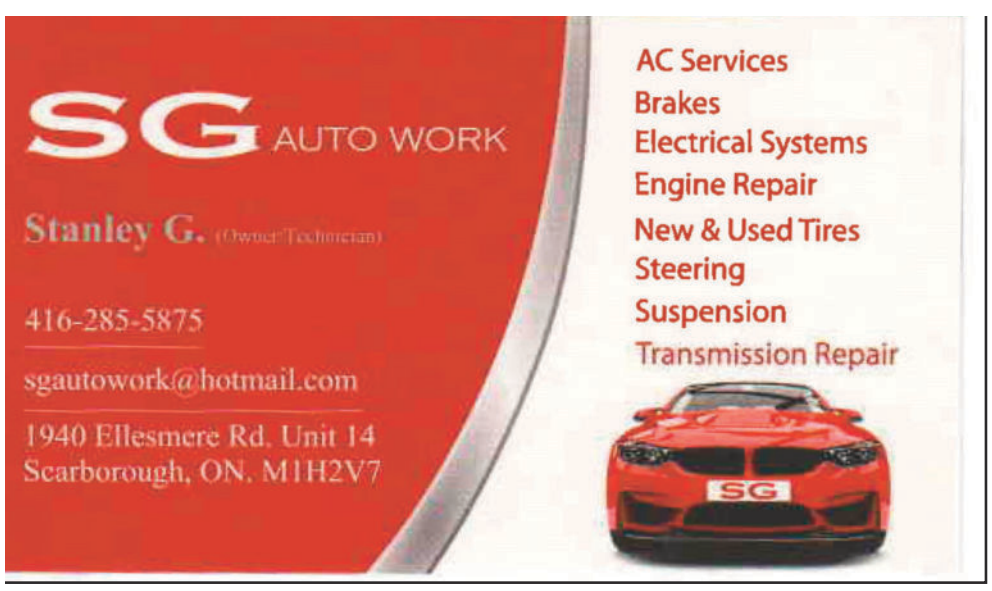








ADS IN EQUALITY WORK!



President Ali says reparations are not a demand for payback or charity

GUYANA'S President, Dr Irfaan Ali, has called for a "mature" discussion on reparations that addresses the lasting development inequalities caused by slavery, saying the issue should not be treated as a demand for "payback" or charity.

Speaking to ITV News presenter Robert Moore ahead of King Charles III's visit to Guyana, Dr Ali said the King would be welcomed warmly, citing Guyanese hospitality and the monarch's longstanding relationship with the country.

"As a country, we will continue to champion the issue of reparation because slavery was the worst indignity to humankind," Dr Ali said during the interview which was aired on Monday night.

Asked about calls for an apology for Britain's colonial past, Dr Ali said an apology would help create "an environment of having free-flowing discussions." He cautioned, however, that an apology should not be seen as an end in itself.

The president said reparations should not be based on assigning a monetary value to the injustice of slavery. Instead, he argued, discussions should identify development gaps and inequalities resulting from the region's history of exploitation and underdevelopment.

"That is a very important question that we need to settle in the conversation, not only about an apology, but how do we define reparation? Some would say it is through a valuation system, but in my humble opinion, you cannot ever value the type of injustice that took place, and you can never, you know, create a monetary mechanism to address that," he said.

Possible measures, he said, could include debt relief and new forms of concessional financing for education, healthcare and mental health, as well as climate adaptation and mitigation.



King Charles with President Irfaan Ali in January

"But what you can do is to identify the development gaps, the development inequality, the underdevelopment that took place as a result of slavery," he pointed out.

Dr Ali rejected the suggestion that reparations amounted to "payback," saying: "This is not payback. It is not charity." He called for a solution that recognises the suffering and consequences of slavery while supporting a development model to address them.

The interview also touched on the contrast between countries that, Dr Ali said, benefited materially from slavery and those left facing its long-term effects. He argued that the wealth generated through exploitation had helped some countries build systems better able to withstand economic shocks.

"You who benefited tremendously from the darkest days of human history, benefited materially and financially, are now telling me that you don't have enough financing to match your needs," the head of state quizzed.

The visit by King Charles III will form part of Their Majesties' Autumn Tour, which was announced by Buckingham Palace back in August.

The King's visit will coincide with the commemoration of six decades of diplomatic relations between Guyana and the United Kingdom, which were formally established following Guyana's attainment of independence in 1966.

Further, the upcoming visit is expected to provide an opportunity for Guyana and the UK to highlight the longstanding ties between the two countries and reaffirm areas of co-operation

Back in January, President Ali met with King Charles III at Buckingham Palace

Hotel owners sue Mohameds for defamation

ARIMU Investments Inc., owner of the Aiden by Best Western hotel in Georgetown, has filed separate defamation lawsuits against Opposition Leader Azruddin Mohamed and his sister, Hana Khamelia Mohamed.

The company is challenging Facebook statements alleging that police resources were being used to provide round-the-clock security at the Robb Street property.

In claims filed in the High Court on October 19, the company is seeking more than $100 million in damages from Azruddin and more than $50 million from Hana.

Both claims also seek aggravated damages exceeding $50 million, alongside orders for the removal of the disputed publications, apologies, and permanent injunctions against further defamatory statements.

Arimu Investments, represented by attorneys Sase Gunraj and Jayaram Sanasie of Gunraj & Co., contended that the publications have damaged, or threaten to damage, its commercial reputation and goodwill, potentially affecting its relationships with customers, business associates, and prospective clients.

In the claim against Azruddin, the company alleged that the statements suggested that the hotel's beneficial ownership was concealed and that it was improperly benefiting from preferential treatment through the deployment of police officers and vehicles.

The company contended that the allegations could cause customers, commercial partners, and government agencies to question the propriety of its operations and its relationship with the government.

The claim stated that Arimu Investments' reputation and goodwill are "valuable commercial assets" that are "fundamental to its ability to attract and retain customers, maintain relationships with business associates, generate revenue and conduct its business successfully."

It further alleged that the statements were capable of causing serious injury to the company's reputation by casting doubt on the transparency of the hotel's ownership and the integrity of its business operations.

The company argued that the allegations concerning the hotel's ownership and alleged use of police resources could undermine confidence among existing and prospective customers, as well as commercial partners.

"The defamatory allegations directly concern the claimant's beneficial ownership, the legitimacy and transparency of its ownership arrangements, the integrity of its shareholders, and the circumstances surrounding the presence of police personnel and police vehicles at the hotel operated under the name 'Aiden by Best Western'," the claim stated.

Arimu Investments further contended that the suggestion that its shareholders were merely nominal owners, while the true beneficial ownership remained concealed, could cause members of the public and the commercial community to question the legitimacy of its business affairs.

It also argued that the allegations of continuous police protection could create the impression that the company was improperly benefiting from state resources, potentially affecting its standing with government agencies, customers, and business

Guyana ferry disaster inquiry hears emergency beacon was unregistered

Guyana's Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the July 18 ferry disaster that left dozens dead has heard that the vessel's emergency beacon was not registered, limiting authorities' ability to identify it through registration records.

Rickford Samaroo, director of the Air Navigation Services Department at the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), testified on Wednesday that the agency had no registration information for the beacon aboard the MV Barima.

"From our side, it wasn't registered," Samaroo said in response to questions from Trinidad and Tobago maritime law expert Nyree Alfonso.

The disclosure came as the commission examined how distress alerts were handled and how quickly authorities became aware of the incident.

Samaroo said distress alerts began arriving at 10:43 p.m. on July 18, but he did not learn of the incident until a call from the GCAA's director general at about 1 a.m. on July 19. He said he was informed that a vessel might be in distress and that two aircraft had been authorized to investigate.

Samaroo explained that staff were required to notify him immediately of distress signals involving aircraft, but there was no equivalent requirement for alerts involving vessels.

He later contacted the airport control tower to advise that the aircraft had been cleared to proceed. During that conversation, he learned of the distress messages received from the United States.

According to the briefing he received from staff, the Maritime Administration Department, the Guyana Defence Force Coast Guard and the lighthouse were notified within five minutes of the alert being received.

Tia Valenzuela, an aeronautical information service officer at the GCAA, told the commission that she was on duty at the control tower at Cheddi Jagan International Airport when she heard a continuous beeping at 10:43 p.m. on July 18. She said she printed a related message.

However, the absence of registration information meant she could not contact the vessel's owner or other relevant parties about the beacon.



The MV Barima — more than 100 people died

Samaroo said an unregistered beacon's identification code could not be matched to records containing details about the vessel, its owner and emergency contacts.

The GCAA receives distress alerts through an arrangement with the United States Mission Control Center as part of the international satellite search and rescue system. Messages include the beacon's identification code, the date and time of transmission, geographical coordinates and an indication of the location's reliability.

An Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) is designed to transmit distress signals during maritime emergencies. Operating on the 406 MHz frequency, it uses the international Cospas-Sarsat satellite system to help search and rescue authorities locate people in danger.

Although an unregistered beacon can still transmit a distress signal and location information, the absence of registration records can make it more difficult for authorities to identify the vessel and contact people familiar with its movements.

The MV Barima was traveling from Georgetown to Port Kaituma, a village in Guyana's Barima-Waini region, when the incident occurred.

The vessel was reportedly carrying an estimated 179 passengers and crew when it sank. Authorities recovered 72 bodies, rescued 76 people and reported 30 others unaccounted for. The figures have been disputed, with questions remaining about the number of people aboard.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, the vessel's captain, chief mate and a Goods Superintendent with the Transport and Harbours Department were charged with murder.

Retired acting Chancellor Carl Singh has also indicated that he would represent Public Works Minister Bishop Juan Edghill at the commission.

The five-member inquiry is chaired by Belizean Justice Godfrey Phillip Smith and is tasked with establishing the circumstances surrounding the disaster.

Its mandate includes examining the vessel's loading and passenger boarding procedures, conditions aboard the ferry, the circumstances of its capsizing and sinking, and the adequacy of search, rescue and recovery operations.

The commission will also investigate the vessel's seaworthiness and maintenance history, the competence of its crew, and whether negligence, misconduct, dereliction of duty or other failures contributed to the disaster.

Samaroo is among approximately 100 witnesses expected to testify before the commission, whose initial two-month timeline has been extended to six months.

Meanwhile, media organizations have been invited to cover and record the daily hearings but will not be permitted to broadcast them live.

Commission Secretary Javed Shadick did not provide a reason for the decision.

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INDIA न्यूज़





Elon Musk (right) has accused the Ambanis of blocking Starlink's entry into India

Why Elon Musk is taking on India's richest man over Starlink

Elon Musk has questioned whether billionaire Mukesh Ambani is the "real boss of India" as his satellite internet company Starlink struggles to secure final approval to launch in the country.

The remark came a day after Musk accused unnamed powerful business interests of trying to block Starlink's entry into India. He then singled out Ambani, whose Reliance conglomerate owns Jio, India's biggest mobile network operator.

India has rejected Musk's allegations, saying its satellite communications rules are fair and non-discriminatory.

Ambani and Reliance Group have not responded to Musk's remarks. The BBC has reached out to them for comment

The row comes as competition grows in India's satellite internet market, with Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel also preparing to launch services.

The rivalry is complicated by the fact that Starlink has also partnered with Ambani's Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel.

In March 2025, both companies signed agreements with SpaceX to distribute Starlink equipment and services in India, subject to government approval. The companies also said they could explore sharing network infrastructure.

Musk first made the allegations on Wednesday, accusing "certain oligarchs" of maintaining a "monopolistic chokehold" on Indian consumers.

"You can guess who they are," he wrote on X, adding that blocking Starlink was "a crime against the people of India".

On Thursday, India's Ministry of Communications responded, saying that three operators - Starlink, Eutelsat OneWeb and Jio Satellite Communications - were at broadly the same stage of the approval process, with all three awaiting security clearances and spectrum allocation before they can launch commercial services.

"The suggestion that the framework or its application is unfair or discriminatory is baseless and misconceived," the ministry said, without naming Musk directly.

Musk continued to question the delay, saying Starlink was already licensed in more than 165 countries.

"Starlink is licensed in over 165 countries and has spent five years complying with every single law and requirement of the government of India, so why still no license? Is Ambani the real boss of India?" he wrote on X on Thursday.

Starlink, owned by Musk's SpaceX, uses satellites in low Earth orbit to provide internet access, particularly in remote areas where mobile networks and broadband cables are difficult or expensive to install.

The company has been trying to enter India since 2021 and has secured key licences. But it still needs final security clearances and spectrum allocation before it can begin commercial services.

Wednesday's row unfolded as senior executives from Starlink, Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel gathered at the India Mobile Congress in Delhi, where all three companies discussed their plans for satellite internet services.

Speaking at the event, Akash Ambani, chairman of Reliance Jio Infocomm and Mukesh Ambani's son, said the company was developing its own satellite communications technology and working towards regulatory approvals.

Asked by a reporter about Musk's allegations, Akash declined to comment and only said, "We want to be heads down and deliver value to our Indian consumers."

Bharti Airtel chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal said his company's satellite venture was also awaiting government approvals.

SpaceX executive Lauren Dreyer, who oversees Starlink's business operations, said the company had spent years working with Indian regulators and had built security controls into its network to meet the country's requirements.



ARIES (March 21 — April 20): If you showcase your big brain on the work front today, you could find that someone above you on the career ladder gets annoyed and hits back at your opinions. Maybe they don't like being told they are wrong, or maybe they think you are after their job!

TAURUS (April 21 — May 21): The most important thing now is that you don't take the bait if others criticize your efforts or make claims about you that are clearly not true. What they want, of course, is for you to overreact and, in doing so, make yourself look bad. Don't fall for it.

GEMINI (May 22 — June 21): You may be inclined to focus on the bigger picture and let other people take care of the details, but that could cause problems down the line. This is one of those days when the details must come first so you have something solid to build on.

CANCER (June 22 — July 23): If you find yourself losing patience with a friend or colleague who seems determined to focus on the negatives while ignoring all the positives, then do yourself a favour and put some distance between you. Their presence alone is an unwelcome distraction.

LEO (July 24 — Aug. 23): Make sure those you work and do business with are on the same wavelength today. If that means explaining to them in words of three syllables or less why they were previously on the wrong track, then do so and don't worry about hurting their feelings.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 — Sept. 23): You know that aspects of your lifestyle need to change, but you seem unable to decide what exactly that is going to mean on a practical level. What occurs over the next few days will point you in the right direction. After that, it's up to you.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 — Oct. 23): The Sun leaves your sign later this week, and when it does, it won't be so easy to complete a task that has been dragging on too long. So get your act together and focus on it to the exclusion of everything else. It could be now or never.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 — Nov. 22): Don't worry too much if a goal you have been working towards is taking longer to reach than you expected. In fact, forget about it for the next few days and pick it up again when the Sun moves into your sign on Friday. You will get there eventually.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 — Dec. 21): Make it your number one objective today and for the rest of the week to turn on the charm and win over people who might otherwise have been against you. You're not actually that far apart in your beliefs and opinions — you just need to talk more.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 — Jan. 20): If there is something important you want to get done on the work front, then pull out all the stops over the next few days and make it happen. People in positions of power will look favourably on you if you are passionate about what you are doing.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 — Feb. 19): The next few days could be critical for your long-term plans, so put everything of a minor nature on hold for a while and focus exclusively on your aims and ambitions. The better you prepare now, the more likely it is you will succeed in the future.

PISCES (Feb. 20 — Mar. 20): What happens today will make it painfully clear that something you have been worrying about for the past few weeks is really of no importance at all. Once you recognize that fact, you will free up the energy needed to change your life for the better.

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Trinidad and Tobago plans phased restart of Petrotrin refinery

The Trinidad and Tobago Government plans to restart the Petrotrin oil refinery at Pointe-a-Pierre, which was shut down in November 2018 amid mounting debt and operational losses.

Finance Minister Davendranath Tancoo announced the plans on Monday as he presented the TT$63.3 billion national budget to Parliament, saying the Government was evaluating proposals from local and international investors to facilitate the refinery's phased restart.

"We will restart the refinery. We are advancing the phased restart of the Guaracara Refinery at Pointe-a-Pierre," Tancoo said.

He said the Government had received a comprehensive report from the Refinery Restart Committee and was assessing proposals from a shortlist of potential investors.

"Let me be clear, we will approach the restart of this national asset with fiscal discipline. Our objective is to secure a credible, commercially viable and fully financed arrangement that protects the national interest while creating the conditions for renewed economic activity," he said.

The refinery, which had operated for more than a century, was closed by the administration of former prime minister Keith Rowley on November 30, 2018. The previous government said Petrotrin had accumulated an estimated TT$12 billion in debt and recorded losses of approximately TT$8 billion over five years.

Tancoo said the closure had affected thousands of people in communities stretching from Couva to Cedros, including contractors and small businesses that depended on the refinery for their livelihoods.

"This is about reinstating the very lifeline to communities, downstream contractors, micro-enterprises, doubles vendors, roti shops, etc. Thousands of residents in communities from Couva to Cedros were suddenly left traumatised by a loss of income to meet the needs of their family since 2018," he said.

He added that the closure had also changed the country's position in the refined petroleum market.

"When the refinery was shut down, the country moved from being a net exporter of refined products to having to import every single litre of diesel, of gasoline, of pitch oil and of engine oil used in this country," Tancoo said.

The finance minister identified energy as the foundation of Trinidad and Tobago's economy, noting that more than 70 per cent of the country's foreign exchange earnings come from energy commodity exports.



The Petrotrin Oil Refinery

He said the Government was also working to address declining natural gas production, which has affected liquefied natural gas (LNG) and petrochemical output.

Tancoo blamed the previous administration for relying heavily on the proposed Dragon gas field in Venezuelan waters while failing to reverse declining gas production.

He said natural gas supply stood at 2.4 billion cubic feet per day, representing a 45 per cent decline in output that had contributed to the permanent closure of Atlantic LNG Train 1 and several petrochemical plants.

"Today the Point Lisas Estate is almost a ghost town and even those plants still operating are producing significantly below capacity. They have devastated our energy security, but we are fixing it," he said.

Tancoo said restoring natural gas supplies was the Government's first priority. To accelerate investment, the administration has established an Energy Accelerator Hub within the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries to streamline regulatory and administrative approvals for major projects.

The hub brings together 33 separate approvals across eight ministries and agencies, a move the Government expects to reduce delays and speed up production.

Tancoo highlighted several projects expected to boost natural gas supplies over the coming years, including developments by bpTT and EOG Resources. He said EOG's Mento development had achieved first gas and reached peak production of 281.58 million standard cubic feet per day in June 2026.

Other projects expected to contribute new supplies include bpTT's Ginger development, Mahogany A Extended Field, Juniper Phase II, Coconut, Aphrodite and Manatee Plus, with several targeting first gas in 2027.

The Government is also pursuing additional exploration and development opportunities, including cross-border and deepwater gas resources. Tancoo said bpTT had secured an exploration and production licence for Loran Phase II, which could help the country monetise more than four trillion cubic feet of natural gas from regional and cross-border fields.

He also cited bpTT's proposed acquisition of Woodside's 70 per cent stake in the Calypso gas field, which is expected to close by the end of 2026.

Beyond natural gas, Tancoo said the Government was pursuing investment in oil exploration and production, including a potential US$21 billion investment involving ExxonMobil.

He said ExxonMobil had completed a three-dimensional seismic acquisition programme in an ultradeepwater block, with analysis underway to identify potential drilling targets. Other international companies, including Chevron and Occidental Petroleum, have also expressed interest in Trinidad and Tobago's energy sector, he added.

Upstream capital expenditure is estimated to exceed US$2 billion in 2026, with investments projected to rise to US$2.3 billion in 2027 and US$2.6 billion in 2028 before reaching US$1.4 billion in 2029, according to Tancoo.

The Government is also encouraging smaller local and foreign operators to develop marginal oil reserves while state-owned Heritage Petroleum Company Limited continues drilling and workover programmes in producing fields, including East Soldado and South West Soldado.

Tancoo said the investments were intended to strengthen the country's energy sector, improve production and restore economic activity in communities affected by the downturn.

Antigua and Barbuda PM calls Beijing country's top development partner

Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne says his government will continue to defend the country's relationship with China despite any consequences, describing Beijing as its most important development partner.

Speaking Thursday at the handover ceremony for the Chinese-funded Pelican Court housing development, Browne urged Antiguans and Barbudans to defend the bilateral relationship in international forums and strengthen ties despite geopolitical pressure.

"There is no other country that has contributed more to our development than the People's Republic of China during the last three decades," Browne said.

He said Chinese assistance over the past 30 years had helped the twin-island nation develop its economic and social infrastructure and improve living conditions, adding that the country owed Beijing lasting gratitude for its support.

Browne said the partnership should continue even when defending it carried consequences.

"So let us continue to march on with China as our most important development partner," he said.

His remarks came as officials marked the handover of Pelican Court, an EC$50 million housing development financed through a Chinese grant. The project comprises 150 two-bedroom homes and forms part of the redevelopment of Booby Alley in the Point community.



Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Browne described the development as China's most socially impactful project in Antigua and Barbuda to date, citing its potential to improve conditions for vulnerable residents.

He thanked the Chinese government on behalf of prospective residents and the wider country, saying the project reflected his administration's commitment to improving living standards, including for the poorest members of society.

Browne said the redevelopment involved more than new buildings and climate-resilient construction, emphasizing that its ultimate purpose was to improve the quality of life of the people who would live there.

US announces more than $340 million in funding for region

The United States has announced more than US$340 million in funding for Caribbean and Central American initiatives focused on digital connectivity, healthcare and regional security.

The funding was announced during the U.S.-Caribbean Dialogue hosted by Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau at the Department of State on Oct. 15. The meeting brought together high-level delegations from 15 Caribbean countries and the Dominican Republic to discuss shared economic, energy and security priorities.

The largest allocation is US$175.8 million for the Caribbean and Central America Undersea Cables Program, which aims to expand high-speed undersea cable connectivity and strengthen the resilience of digital connections across the region.

The State Department also announced US$103 million in funding through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) to strengthen regional security and protect critical infrastructure.

Of that amount, US$37 million will support efforts to secure critical digital infrastructure and ports and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Another US$66 million will strengthen Caribbean countries' capacity to counter transnational criminal organizations and secure regional borders. The latter allocation includes US$55 million in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement assistance and US$11 million in Foreign Military Financing.



Christopher Landau

The United States also intends to provide US$61.5 million through the Americas Strategic Partnership for Independent Regional Healthcare Excellence (ASPIRE), working with Congress to help Caribbean governments develop self-sufficient healthcare workforces.

According to the State Department, the initiative will support the ethical and transparent recruitment of health professionals, with fair compensation going directly to workers.

The announcements formed part of broader discussions on energy security, economic growth, disaster response, health cooperation and efforts to disrupt illicit narcotics and firearms trafficking.

Alongside the funding announcements, the State Department said it would host a Caribbean Investment Summit in early 2027 to connect U.S. companies, financiers and government finance agencies with Caribbean partners. The summit is intended to help advance commercial projects in open and competitive markets.

The dialogue also explored opportunities for investment in energy, critical minerals, ports and digital infrastructure, with participants meeting American business leaders to discuss projects intended to generate jobs and economic growth in the United States and the Caribbean.

The United States also plans to work with Caribbean security ministers and the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) to convene the next Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Security Ministerial in spring 2027.



The actual 51st state: Puerto Rico formally asks for statehood



Puerto Rico Governor Jenniffer González

Puerto Rico Gov. Jenniffer González has signed a resolution formally requesting that U.S. President Donald Trump and Congress admit the Caribbean territory as the country's 51st state.

González signed House Joint Resolution 391 on Friday, saying the measure fulfills her administration's commitment to prioritize statehood and reflects the wishes of Puerto Ricans expressed in previous nonbinding referendums.

"With this signing, we fulfill the commitment of our government program to prioritise statehood and honour the will of our people expressed at the ballot box," González said.

The governor, who leads the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (NPP), said the resolution establishes an official request by the Puerto Rican government for admission to the United States on equal terms with existing states.

She said previous efforts had focused on communicating the results of plebiscites to Washington rather than formally requesting admission through legislation.

"Within the framework of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, we take our request for full equality to those who have the power to act," González said.

"We will continue working in Puerto Rico and Washington to advance it."

Puerto Rico has been a U.S. territory since 1898, when it came under American control following the Spanish-American War. Its political status remains a longstanding source of division on the island.

While González's NPP advocates statehood, the opposition Popular Democratic Party supports maintaining Puerto Rico's commonwealth relationship with the United States. The Puerto Rican Independence Party, meanwhile, advocates independence.

González, accompanied by government officials and NPP lawmakers, maintained that the resolution reflected the will of the people despite continued opposition to statehood.

"This is the time to define ourselves. The time for decolonisation has arrived," she said.

Puerto Ricans have been U.S. citizens since 1917 and have served in the country's armed forces and contributed to its development, González said.

"It is now up to Congress to heed that will and exercise its constitutional authority to admit Puerto Rico as a state of the Union," she added.

Puerto Rico has held several non-binding referendums on its political status, but Congress has not approved legislation establishing a binding process to determine the territory's future. Previous congressional proposals have considered statehood, independence and sovereignty through free association as possible options.

The latest resolution specifically seeks statehood, leaving the decision in the hands of Congress, which has the constitutional authority to admit new states. The resolution does not itself change Puerto Rico's political status, and the Trump administration has not announced a position on the latest request.

Bahamas monitors COVID-19 cluster in Grand Bahama

The Bahamas government is monitoring a reported cluster of COVID-19 cases in Grand Bahama after 20 people tested positive following a church retreat held from Oct. 8 to 11.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness said 112 people participated in the retreat, with all 20 positive cases identified through rapid testing.

Of those who tested positive, 14 were residents of Grand Bahama, while the remaining six were from New Providence.

One of the 14 Grand Bahama residents has been admitted to Rand Memorial Hospital and is listed in stable condition, the ministry said.

The ministry said it was "closely monitoring a reported cluster of COVID-19 cases in Grand Bahama" and urged residents to follow established prevention measures.

These include staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations, washing hands frequently with soap and water, using alcohol-based hand sanitizer, improving indoor ventilation and wearing a well-fitted mask when appropriate.

The ministry also advised people who are sick to stay home, cover coughs and sneezes, and take precautions when around older relatives and others at increased risk of severe illness.

COVID-19 symptoms can include fever or chills, coughing, sore throat, congestion, fatigue, body aches, headaches, loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Symptoms can range from mild to severe, and some infected people may experience few or no symptoms while still transmitting the virus, the ministry said.

Residents were urged to seek emergency medical attention for severe or rapidly worsening symptoms, including difficulty breathing, persistent chest pain or pressure, new confusion or an inability to stay awake, and pale, gray or blue lips.

The ministry also encouraged the public to rely on information issued by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and other official sources.

The reported cluster comes as COVID-19 deaths in The Bahamas remain far below the levels recorded during earlier waves of the pandemic, particularly in 2021.

However, the government has not indicated whether the latest cases have been linked to a particular variant of the virus.

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Nicholson urges CCJ judges to shun 'public bickering' amid internal tensions

Former Jamaica Attorney General A.J. Nicholson has urged judges of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) to resolve their differences privately and professionally, warning that public disputes and leaks of confidential correspondence undermine the vision behind the regional court.

In an open letter to the Trinidad-based court's judges, Nicholson said public disagreements among members of the judiciary were never intended to become a feature of the CCJ, which was established to serve as the Caribbean's final appellate court and promote regional justice.

"To cut to the chase, it was never at any time a part of any thinking in those deliberations or reports to the meetings of heads of government that the CCJ was being created to provide its judges with a platform for public bickering," he wrote.

Nicholson said disagreements among judges should be resolved in a mature and empathetic manner, drawing on their experience in handling complex and contentious legal matters.

"There was never even the slightest thought that personality issues that would normally arise between or among the judges, hardly combatants, would not be approached and resolved in mature, empathetic fashion by experienced judicial minds," he added.

His intervention comes amid allegations of internal tensions at the court, including claims of administrative overreach and concerns about judicial panel assignments. The controversy intensified after the Trinidad and Tobago Sunday Express published emails it said were leaked from internal court correspondence.

In August, CCJ President Justice Winston Anderson rejected allegations that judicial panels had been altered to influence case outcomes. He said a decision to remove a judge from a panel was based on concerns about judicial attire rather than the judge's views on a case.

Anderson also condemned the unauthorised disclosure of confidential court communications, warning that such leaks could undermine judicial independence and public confidence. While defending robust disagreements as part of normal appellate court deliberations, he acknowledged that some matters could have been handled differently.

The Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission has since said a transparent and independent review would be undertaken into the allegations.

More recently, the Sunday Express reported that CCJ Justice Peter Jamadar had accused Anderson of administrative overreach following an investigation involving Jamadar's administrative officer, identified as Ms Simmons-Peters.



AJ Nicholson

According to the newspaper, Jamadar alleged that the officer was questioned about her outside activities during an inquiry into a media leak and warned that she could face up to two years in prison under Trinidad and Tobago's Computer Misuse Act. The report also said her files and communications were scrutinised.

In a six-page email reportedly sent to Anderson and fellow judges on September 4, Jamadar described the episode as an "abuse of power" and questioned Anderson's oversight of an inquiry involving his staff's conduct.

The Sunday Express also reported that Justice Rajnauth-Lee received a similarly worded email in connection with the investigation, which was led by the court's IT manager, identified as Mr Burgess.

Nicholson did not address each of the allegations individually in his letter but stressed the importance of protecting judges from political and other external pressures while maintaining a professional working environment.

"There was deep concern that the working environment for the judges should be accommodating, with protective guardrails provided to insulate them from political and other powerful kinds of pressure," he wrote.

Nicholson, who also served as Jamaica's foreign affairs minister, was involved in the preparatory work that led to the establishment of the CCJ. He served as deputy to former Barbados Chief Justice Sir David Simmons and Prime Minister Mia Mottley when they chaired the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of the Caribbean Court of Justice.

He said he was responsible for updating meetings of Caribbean Community (Caricom) heads of government on the committee's deliberations, which were overseen by then St. Lucia Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony, who held responsibility for justice matters.

Nicholson said Jamaica's failure to fully accede to the CCJ had left him particularly conscious of the court's founding vision and the principles that guided its creation.

He praised the arrangements established for appointing judges and financing the court, saying they had earned international recognition, and argued that the region's confidence in its own legal expertise had been justified by the court's achievements.

During its formative years, he said, the CCJ also had to counter claims that it was being established as a "hanging court" — a reference to concerns about its potential role in death penalty cases.



Tek weh unnuself!' Holness warns gunmen after deadly shootout

Jamaica Prime Minister Dr. Andrew Holness has ordered the security forces to intensify targeted operations against criminal gangs and their supporters following a deadly gunfight in Five Miles, near Sligoville in St. Catherine, that left two policemen and three civilians dead and a 10-year-old girl injured.

Holness, who returned to Jamaica on Saturday from a trip to New York, was briefed by Police Commissioner Dr. Kevin Blake on the incident, which unfolded on Friday and involved an hours-long standoff between police and armed men.

The deceased police officers have been identified as Corporal Trevoy Shaw and Constable Devoney Rose. The three civilians killed were identified as Errol Hussey, his son, Malique Hussey, and his nephew, Javoun Cogle.

Three male suspects were fatally shot during the confrontation. A 10-year-old girl was wounded, while other civilians inside the house reportedly escaped unharmed.

Holness described the attack on the police officers as an act of "calculated brutality" and "sheer evil," saying preliminary accounts pointed to a coordinated effort by the gunmen to ambush the security forces.

According to the prime minister, the emerging accounts suggest that the gunmen used misdirection and diversionary gunfire before turning their weapons on officers who moved forward to retrieve a child reportedly being held hostage inside the house.

He said reports of possible prearranged transportation and support for the gunmen must also be thoroughly investigated.



Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness

"We must uncover and dismantle every person, every network, every resource, every facilitator who enabled this violence," Holness said.

He urged the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) to use the full force of the law to dismantle criminal networks, emphasizing that those responsible for organized violence must be identified, disarmed, arrested and prosecuted.

Rejecting portrayals of gunmen as protectors of their communities, Holness said poverty, exclusion and social injustice could not justify criminal violence.

"They are not protectors; they are not justified by poverty, exclusion, or social injustice. They are not freedom fighters, they are not Robin Hoods, they are not rebels or misunderstood victims. They are parasites and pestilence upon our society," he said.

The prime minister said the reported willingness of the gunmen to use members of their own household as human shields was particularly disturbing.

He also condemned those who shelter, finance or arm criminal groups, as well as those who glorify gunmen and illegal firearms.

"There can be no moral equivalency. There can be no romanticising of guns; no glorifying of gunmen; and no tolerance for those who shelter finance, arm, and celebrate them," Holness said.

He offered condolences to the families of the slain officers and civilians, expressed hope for the injured girl's full recovery, and said the incident underscored the need for Jamaica to remain vigilant against organized criminal violence.

Holness said the attack had shaken members of the security forces but had not weakened their resolve. He directed Blake to accelerate planned operations against gang leaders and other suspected criminals already being pursued through intelligence-led investigations.

"Bring them forward. Intensify it," the prime minister said, adding that the government would discuss any additional resources needed to support the operations.

He warned that the incident pointed to a level of criminal organization that posed a threat to national security and said the response must be firm while maintaining the rule of law.

The National Security Council is scheduled to hold its regular monthly meeting this week, when the situation is expected to be reviewed.

Holness said the Five Miles incident must serve as a turning point in the country's response to organized crime, arguing that the authorities must confront the threat directly without abandoning the principles of a civil society.

"And we must meet them head on. We must meet them head on and maintain our civility and the rule of law," he said.

He ended his remarks with a warning to gunmen: "Tek weh unnuself!"



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Paulsen's five-for sinks West Indies in World Cup opener

West Indies endured a difficult start to their International Masters Cricket (IMC) Over-40s World Cup campaign, suffering an 88-run defeat to Australia in Saturday's opening match at Providence National Stadium.

Australia's 266 for five from 45 overs proved beyond the reach of the hosts, whose batting faltered under pressure before they were dismissed for 178 in 40.1 overs. Australian captain Steve Paulsen delivered the decisive blow, claiming five wickets to lead his side to a commanding victory.

Opener Ryan Broad anchored the Australian innings with 58 from 76 balls, laying the foundation for a competitive total alongside Glen Batticciotto, who contributed 48.

The pair put on 94 runs for the first wicket in 19 overs before Broad was stumped by Denesh Ramdin off Imran Khan's bowling.

Batticciotto also scored 48, while Greg Hunt matched that contribution and Paulsen added 45 as Australia maintained a strong scoring rate through the middle overs.

At 200 for three in the 36th over, the visitors appeared poised to push well beyond 266. However, West Indies tightened their bowling and restricted the Australians to 66 runs in the final nine overs while taking two additional wickets.

Khan was the standout bowler for the home team, finishing with two wickets for 36 runs from his nine overs.

West Indies' pursuit never gained momentum, as Australia's bowlers struck repeatedly to leave the hosts reeling at 52 for four in the 15th over.

Antonnel Atwell and Ramdin attempted to stabilise the innings, combining for a fifth-wicket partnership of 55 runs that briefly offered hope of a recovery.



Australian Opener Ryan Broad

Atwell scored 28 before Paulsen bowled him, breaking the partnership and triggering another collapse.

Ramdin top-scored for West Indies with 31 from 55 deliveries, but his resistance was not enough to revive the chase. Khan remained unbeaten on 26, while Larry Babb provided a late burst with 21 from just 16 balls.

Those contributions offered some resistance, but Australia maintained control and completed the victory comfortably.

Paulsen's five-wicket haul was the defining performance of the second innings, as he finished with figures of five for 41 to ensure West Indies never threatened Australia's total.

Mark Cleary supported his captain with two wickets for 33 runs.

The result leaves West Indies with work to do as they seek to recover from their opening setback.

Simmons, Walton smash WI Champions to Legends title

West Indies Champions delivered a commanding performance to capture the World Championship of Legends title on Sunday, overwhelming England by nine wickets after Lendl Simmons and Chadwick Walton produced unbeaten half-centuries to complete a dominant run chase.

Simmons finished on 77 not out and Walton on 58 not out as the Caribbean side raced to 160 for one, reaching its target with 18 balls remaining at Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

Their devastating partnership followed a disciplined bowling display led by Player of the Match Dwayne Bravo, whose three-wicket haul helped restrict England to 159 for seven.

England's innings was in serious trouble at 61 for five in the 10th over after Bravo made decisive inroads into the batting lineup.

However, Moeen Ali and Owais Shah mounted a recovery that gave England a fighting total. Ali struck 60 from 39 balls, including four sixes and four fours, while Shah remained unbeaten on 38 from 28 deliveries.

The pair added 54 runs for the sixth wicket, reviving England's hopes after the early collapse.

Ali eventually fell to Raymon Reifer in the 15th over, but Shah continued to battle, combining with Toby Roland-Jones in an unbroken 28-run stand to take England to 159 for seven.

Bravo finished with impressive figures of three for 21 from his four overs. Fidel Edwards, Sheldon Cottrell, Reifer and Carlos Brathwaite claimed one wicket each to complete a collective bowling effort that kept England from posting a more imposing total.

West Indies made an aggressive start to the chase, with Chris Gayle and Simmons putting on 42 runs inside the first six overs.

Gayle struck 21 from 14 balls before Ajmal Shahzad bowled him, bringing Walton to the crease.

England needed wickets to regain control, but instead encountered an unstoppable partnership. Simmons and Walton combined power with calculated stroke play, denying England another breakthrough and steadily closing in on the title.

Simmons hammered eight fours and three sixes in his unbeaten 53-ball innings, while Walton's 35-ball knock featured four sixes and three fours.

Their unbroken 124-run stand carried West Indies to 160 for one, sealing the championship in emphatic fashion and leaving England's bowlers without another wicket.

Walton's outstanding performances throughout the competition earned him the Batter of the Tournament award, while Shivnarine Chanderpaul received the Legend of the Tournament honor.

The individual accolades capped a memorable campaign for the West Indies Champions, who combined Bravo's incisive bowling with the explosive batting of Simmons and Walton when the title was on the line. A delighted Gayle said the triumph would resonate with supporters throughout the region, particularly after the West Indies senior men's T20 International team had drawn its series 2-2 with India.

"I'm absolutely delighted for the guys. England played brilliantly, and I want to congratulate them.

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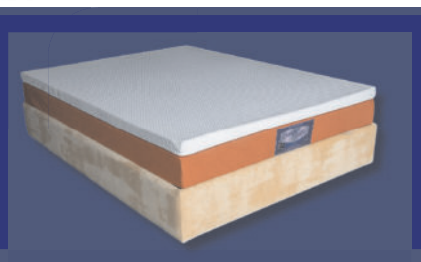
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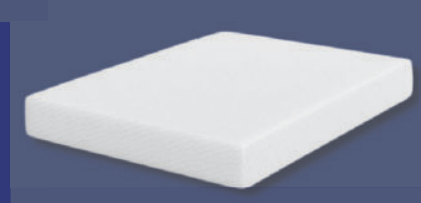
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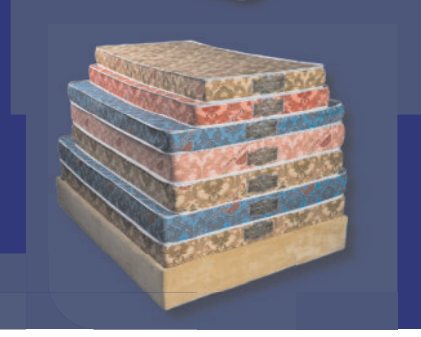
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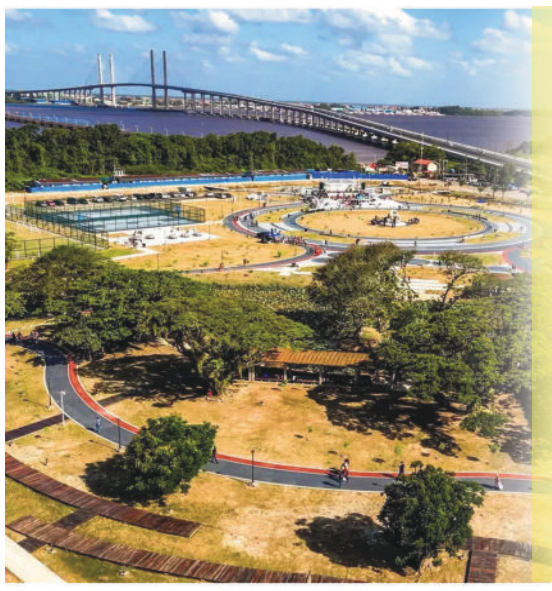
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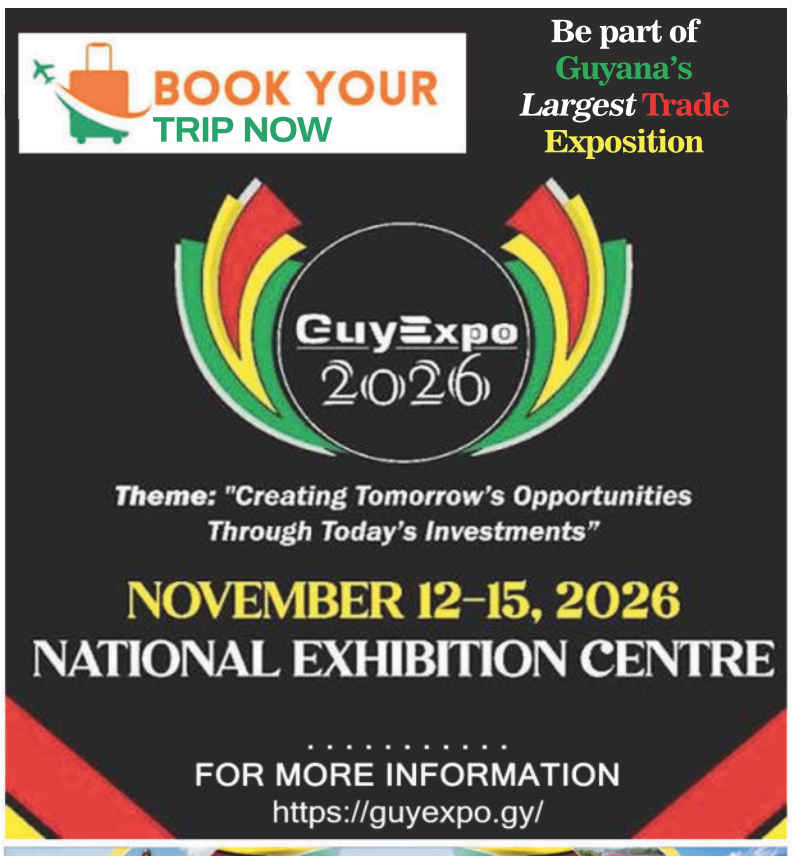
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